Honeydew

Textbook in English for Class VIII

0849

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OFFICES OF THE PUBLICATION DIVISION, NCERT

NCERT Campus
Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi 110 016 **Phone : 011-26562708**

108, 100 Feet Road
Hosdakere Halli Extension
Banashankari III Stage
Bengaluru 560 085 **Phone : 080-26725740**

Navjivan Trust Building
P.O.Navjivan
Ahmedabad 380 014 **Phone : 079-27541446**

CWC Campus
Opp. Dhankal Bus Stop
Panihati
Kolkata 700 114 **Phone : 033-25530454**

CWC Complex
Maligaon
Guwahati 781 021 **Phone : 0361-2674869**

Publication Team

Head, Publication Division : *Anup Kumar Rajput*

Chief Editor : *Shweta Uppal*

Chief Production Officer : *Arun Chitkara*

Chief Business Manager (Incharge) : *Amitabh Kumar*

Production Officer : *Atul Sexana*

Cover, Layout and Illustrations
Blue Fish

Photographs
Nimisha Kapoor

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Foreword

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centered system of education outlined in the National Policy of Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than

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a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The textbook attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering, discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the textbook development committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the advisory committee in languages, Professor Namwar Singh, and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor R. Amritavalli, for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this textbook; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, materials and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairpersonship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinements.

Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

New Delhi
30 November 2007

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Rationalisation of Content in the Textbooks

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to reduce content load on students. The National Education Policy 2020, also emphasises reducing the content load and providing opportunities for experiential learning with creative mindset. In this background, the NCERT has undertaken the exercise to rationalise the textbooks across all classes. Learning Outcomes already developed by the NCERT across classes have been taken into consideration in this exercise.

Contents of the textbooks have been rationalised in view of the following:

- Content based on genres of literature in the textbooks and supplementary readers at different stages of school education
- Content that is meant for achieving Learning Outcomes for developing language proficiency and is accessible at different stages
- For reducing the curriculum load and examination stress in view of the previling condition of the Pandemic
- Content, which is easily accessible to students without much interventions from teachers and can be learned by children through self-learning or peer-learning
- Content, which is irrelevant in the present context

This present edition, is a reformatted version after carrying out the changes given above.

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Textbook Development Committee

Chairperson, Advisory Committee in Languages

Professor Namwar Singh, formerly *Chairman*, School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Chief Advisor

R. Amritavalli, *Professor*, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

Chief Coordinator

Ram Janma Sharma, Former *Professor* and *Head*, Department of Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

Members

Beena Sugathan, *PGT* (*English*), Loreto Convent, Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi

Madhavi Gayathri Raman, *Lecturer,* English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad

Rooma Palit, *PGT* (*English*), Delhi Public School, Nalcognar Angul, Orissa

Shyamala Kumaradas, (formerly of CIEFL), Hyderabad, 3C Sheetal Haven, Peringavu, Trichur

Member–Coordinator

Nasiruddin Khan, Former *Reader in English,* Department of Education in Languages, NCERT, New Delhi

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CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part IV A (Article 51 A)

Fundamental Duties

Fundamental Duties – It shall be the duty of every citizen of India —

(a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;

(b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;

(c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;

(d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;

(e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;

(f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;

(g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;

(h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;

(i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;

(j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;

(k) who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

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Notes for the Teacher

General

- Learning a language means using it for a wide variety of purposes. Language is best acquired when attention is focused on meaning, not on form.
- Words and phrases not closely related to objects and action remain empty and lifeless to young learners. Language comes alive when presented in meaning-making contexts.
- Words/phrases that are used to accomplish many useful purposes follow a certain system inherent in the language itself.
- Learners become familiar with the system through continuous exposure to the language in meaning-focused situations.
- Interaction, discussion and sharing of ideas among learners provide opportunities that elicit 'real' information about them and their experiences and opinions.
- Encourage learners to work in pairs and small groups and let them go beyond the textbook by providing a variety of language inputs for spontaneous and natural use of language.
- Build on the exercises given in the textbook and design more tasks/activities in keeping with learners' interests, needs and surroundings. Employ free-response exercises (with more than one possible response).
- Promote reading habits through story reading (not merely teaching stories as texts), story retelling, choral reading, shared reading, etc.
- Create class libraries for exchange of books and shared reading. The library may also move with children to the next higher class.
- Poems need not be taught line by line, word by word. You may give a model reading but let every child read the poem on her/his own to feel the richness of language, rhythm and music of words. Exercises accompanying the poem are more for understanding the poem as a whole than for teaching language items.
- Advertisement is also literary genre. You will find that some advertisements have been given on the inner covers of the textbook. Have a discussion in the class on these concerns. You

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may ask them to do a project on these social issues and concerns. Such as educating the girlchild, environment protection.

- Encourage learners to tell new stories, narrate anecdotes, compose short poems in English or their own language, talk about pictures, illustrations in the book and cartoons in newspapers/magazines. Don't get anxious about the errors they will make. Constant exposure, practice and correction in the form of feedback will help them improve themselves by and by.
- Every page has a column for words and meanings. Encourage children to write down other words they find difficult, along with their meanings, in this column.

Units 1-3

The Best Christmas Present in the World

Some suggestions given below are applicable to all prose lessons in the book.

- A war story against the backdrop of Christmas, a festival marked by family reunion, exchange of presents and universal bonhomie. Connie, aged 101, receives a present from a stranger whom she mistakes for her long-awaited husband. What is the present — the letter or the mistaken identity of the visitor?
- Spend about 20 minutes discussing the dates and events given under Before you read. Since the answers are given later in the book, the focus should be on the nature of each event — whether, in human terms, the event recalls defeat and destruction or endeavour and success. Let children express their own views. Even if their observations do not reveal any understanding of the nature of events, the discussion session will provide an excellent base for initiating work on the story under reference.
- The story is sectioned into three parts. Parts II and III may be sectioned further according to convenience and time available.
- Discuss each illustration with reference to the story. Illustrations are given for better comprehension and sharper visual appeal.
- Comprehension Check at the end of each section is a recall of what children have read so far. Design while-reading comprehension exercises in the form of factual comprehension questions, multiple choice questions and/or completion of sentences, etc.

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- Here is one example in three formats:
  - Factual or inferential comprehension (Answer the question in your own words.)

    Why is Jim 'ashamed to say' that Fritz 'began it'?
  - Multiple choice (Mark the right answer.)

    Jim is 'ashamed to say' that Fritz 'began it' because

    (i) he didn't know how to do it.

    (ii) he wishes he had done it first.

    (iii) he didn't want to do it.
  - Sentence completion : (Choose the right item and complete the sentence.)

    But it is true, _____, that Fritz began it.

    (much to my delight / shame / dismay)
- A related item here is the use of 'begin' and 'start' in appropriate contexts.

  Use 'begin' or 'start' appropriately in the following sentences.

  (i) What time do you _____ work in the morning?

  (ii) If we want to get there, we should _____ now.

  (iii) The film _____ at 7 pm.

  (iv) No matter how you try, the car won't _____.
  - Very often 'begin' and 'start' can be used in the same way, though 'start' is more common in informal speech. [See sentences (i) and (iii)]
  - In some constructions only 'start' can be used. [See sentences (ii) and (iv)].
- Questions under working with the text to be answered orally, later to be written in the copy book.
- At the end of the lesson, draw children's attention to the two quotations given in the box. Let them discuss how the story illustrates the same ideas. Then, ask them to find sentences in the story which appeal to them most. Here are some examples:
  - We agreed about everything and he was my enemy.
  - No one dies in a football match. No children are orphaned. No wives become widows.
  - I know from all that happened today how much both armies long for peace. We shall be together again, I'm sure of it. (It's a good example of the use of 'irony' in the story.)

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The Ant and the Cricket

- Spend about 15 minutes eliciting, and listening to, fables or fable-like stories from children, preferably in their own language(s). Help them retell one or two in English by providing appropriate words and phrases.
- The story about the Sun and the Wind at the end of 'Glimpses of the Past' may be used here. Ask them if it's a fable, though there are no animals in it.
- Try the following writing task.

  Rearrange the following sentences to construct a story. Start with sentence 4.

  1. One cold day, a hungry grasshopper came to the anthill and begged for a little something to eat.
  2. He replied, "Alas! I spent all my time singing and playing and dancing, and never thought about winter."
  3. One ant asked him how he had spent his time during summer and whether he had saved anything for winter.
  4. A nest of ants had been occupied all through the summer and autumn collecting food for winter.
  5. They carefully stored it in the underground chambers of their home.
  6. Then we have nothing to give you.
  7. Thus, when winter came, they had plenty to eat.
  8. People who play and sing all summer should only dance in winter.
  9. The ant answered.

- Find three adjectives in the first stanza associated with summer and spring.
- Find four phrases/lines in the same stanza associated with the onset of winter.
- Suppose the last line of the first stanza were to be rewritten as '*Oh! What will become of me? Says the cricket.*' Would you find it acceptable in the poem? If not, why not?
- Speak the words given below. Ask children to write the word, and against it two new words that rhyme.

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sing _____ _____

crumb _____ _____

through _____ _____

wished _____ _____

(Last sound in 'crumb' is 'm'. In 'wished' it is 't'.)

- Activity 4 under working with language needs patience and time. Punctuation in writing sentences is an important teaching point. Since the activity is to be taken up in groups, there will be several versions of each sentence to begin with. Encourage children to discuss why only one version is grammatically acceptable and not the other.

The Tsunami

- A natural calamity causing huge destruction and loss of life and property. Alongside the story of deep sorrow are reassuring details of courage, survival and resilience.
- While covering sections and sub sections of the text, focus on situations in which children realise the importance of doing whatever possible to save human and animal life, to participate in relief work and to understand the concept of disaster management.
- Elicit their comments on, and reactions to, the stories of Meghna and Almas. Focus on values such as courage, care and compassion in the bitter struggle for survival and rehabilitation.
- The activity under Before you read is like an elementary geography lesson. Map reading along with language work (asking/answering questions, spotting location/ direction and describing them with precision) is a good example of softening subject boundaries and conforming to the idea of language across the curriculum. Use other maps from the geography/ history textbook for further practice.
- While dealing with 'Active/Passive voice' (working with language: Activity 3), provide samples of texts exemplifying the use of passive voice such as short newspaper reports and descriptions of processes/experiments. As far as possible, avoid a mechanical transformation exercise confined to isolated sentences. Try a simple exercise given here.

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Complete the passage using passive forms of the verbs given in brackets.

Olive oil _____ (use) for cooking, salad dressing, etc. Olives_____ (pick) in autumn when they are ripe. They _____(shake) from the trees and _____ (gather) up, usually by hand. Then they _____ (grind) to a thick paste which _____ (spread) onto special mats. The mats then _____ (layer) up on the pressing machine which will gently squeeze them to produce olive oil.

- The last activity under speaking and writing is a step towards reducing the gap between children's life at school and their life outside the school.

Geography Lesson

- Children already know words like 'aeroplane, airport', etc. Draw their attention to words like 'jetliner', 'jet engine' and 'jetlag' in the following activity.

(i) Match items under **A** with those under **B**

A	B
Jetliner	• fatigue/tiredness after a long flight
Jetlag	• rich social group flying around the world for business or pleasure
Jet engine	• aircraft powered by a jet engine
(the) jet set	• engine that emits high-speed hot gases at the back when it moves forward.

(ii) Check the meaning of 'jet black' and 'jetsam' in the dictionary. Complete the idiom : jetsam and _____

- Today, if there is a border dispute or any other contentious issue between two countries, an organisation called the United Nations acts as a mediator to keep peace and order in the world. Encourage children to gather information about the UN and its constituent bodies.
- Peace Memorial Park is the only park of its kind in the world. It is in Hiroshima, Japan, and marks the spot where the first atomic bomb was dropped on _____ (Children will remember the date and event if they recall the activity under

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Before you read in *The Best Christmas Present in the World).* A mini project could be planned on this.

- Ask children to draw a map of their locality/village depicting its physical features and distances between places, etc.
- Recite and write on the blackboard the following poem and discuss the items given at the end of the poem.

Wake
gently this morning
to a different day.

Listen
There is no bray
of buses,
no horns blow.

There is only
the silence
of a city
hushed
with snow.

- Name a few cities in India which the poem reminds you of.
- Which words/phrases in the poem evoke images different from those suggested by 'the silence of the city'?

Glimpses of the Past

- 'Glimpses' of the history of our country to be understood through pictures with strips of text for support. Children have a natural enthusiasm for this kind of material in the textbook.
- Children may read the comic strip aloud. Then they break up into small groups, discuss what they have read and write a summary. Each group presents its summary one by one. The whole class then enters into a general discussion, and a consolidated draft of the composition is prepared with the active support of the teacher.
- Conversely, divide the class into small groups. Let each group look at and describe a set of pictures (assigned to them) and construct their own text. Texts thus produced can be put together to form a coherent story, to be edited for accuracy.

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- If necessary, texts may first be produced in the child's own language and the teacher can help them to reformulate these in English. For children fluent in English, this may be an opportunity to formulate equivalent texts in their own languages.
- Some details of each 'glimpse' of the past may be had from the history textbook of the same class. The history teacher may be invited to facilitate the activity.
- Picture reading under speaking and writing to be attempted in the same manner.
- Creating a comic (Activity 5) will be great fun if children can be persuaded to draw/learn to draw matchstick figures. Enlist the help of the art teacher.

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1 The Best Christmas Present in the World

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Before you read

There are some dates or periods of time in the history of the world that are so significant that everyone knows and remembers them. The story you will read mentions one such date and event: a war between the British and the Germans in 1914. Can you guess which war it was?

Do you know which events the dates below refer to?

(a) 4 July 1776 *(b) 17 December 1903*
(c) 6 August 1945 *(d) 30 January 1948*
(e) 12 April 1961 *(f) 20 July 1969*

The answers are on page 23.

I

I spotted it in a junk shop in Bridport, a roll-top desk. The man said it was early nineteenth century, and oak. I had wanted one, but they were far too expensive. This one was in a bad condition, the roll-top in several pieces, one leg clumsily mended, scorch marks all down one side. It was going for very little money. I thought I could restore it. It would be a risk, a challenge, but I had to have it. I paid the man and brought it back to my workroom at the back of the garage. I began work on it on Christmas Eve.

I removed the roll-top completely and pulled out the drawers. The veneer had lifted almost everywhere — it

spotted it: saw it; found it (informal)
scorch marks: burn marks
was going for: was selling for (informal)
restore: (*here*) repair
veneer: a thin layer of plastic or decorative wood on furniture of cheap wood

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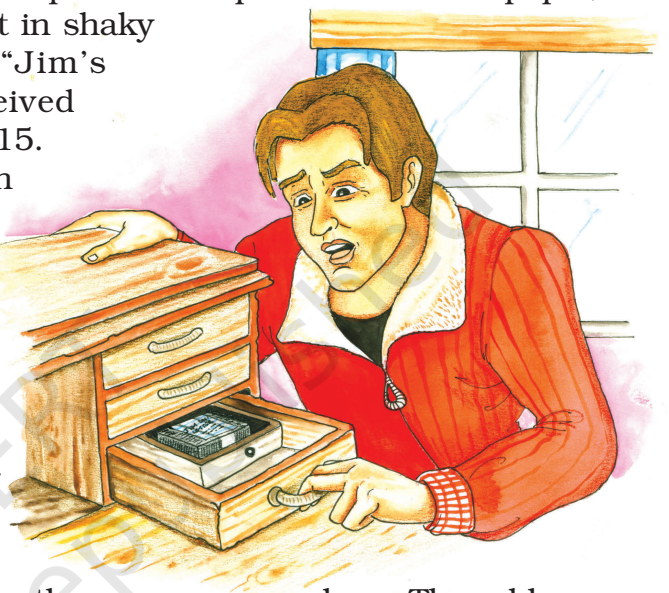
looked like water damage to me. Both fire and water had clearly taken their toll on this desk. The last drawer was stuck fast. I tried all I could to ease it out gently. In the end I used brute force. I struck it sharply with the side of my fist and the drawer flew open to reveal a shallow space underneath, a secret drawer. There was something in there. I reached in and took out a small black tin box. Sello-taped to the top of it was a piece of lined notepaper, and written on it in shaky handwriting: "Jim's last letter, received January 25, 1915. To be buried with me when the time comes." I knew as I did it that it was wrong of me to open the box, but curiosity got the better of my scruples. It usually does.

taken their toll on: damaged

stuck fast: shut tight



scruples: feelings that make you hesitate to do something wrong

Inside the box there was an envelope. The address read: "Mrs Jim Macpherson, 12 Copper Beeches, Bridport, Dorset." I took out the letter and unfolded it. It was written in pencil and dated at the top — "December 26, 1914".

Comprehension Check

1. *What did the author find in a junk shop?*
2. *What did he find in a secret drawer? Who do you think had put it in there?*

II

Dearest Connie,

I write to you in a much happier frame of mind because something wonderful has just happened that I must tell

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you about at once. We were all standing to in our trenches yesterday morning, Christmas morning. It was crisp and quiet all about, as beautiful a morning as I've ever seen, as cold and frosty as a Christmas morning should be.

I should like to be able to tell you that we began it. But the truth, I'm ashamed to say, is that Fritz began it. First someone saw a white flag waving from the trenches opposite. Then they were calling out to us from across no man's land, "Happy Christmas, Tommy! Happy Christmas!" When we had got over the surprise, some of us shouted back, "Same to you, Fritz! Same to you!" I thought that would be that. We all did. But then suddenly one of them was up there in his grey greatcoat and waving a white flag. "Don't shoot, lads!" someone shouted. And no one did. Then there was another Fritz up on the parapet, and another. "Keep your heads down," I told the men, "it's a trick." But it wasn't.

One of the Germans was waving a bottle above his head. "It is Christmas Day, Tommy. We have schnapps. We have sausage. We meet you? Yes?" By this time there were dozens of them walking towards us across no man's land and not a rifle between them. Little Private Morris was the first up. "Come on, boys. What are we waiting for?" And then there was no stopping them. I was the officer. I should have stopped them there and then, I suppose, but the truth is that it never even occurred to me I should. All along their line and ours I could see men walking slowly towards one another, grey coats, khaki coats meeting in the middle. And I was one of them. I was part of this. In the middle of the war we were making peace.

You cannot imagine, dearest Connie, my feelings as I looked into the eyes of the Fritz officer, who approached me, hand outstretched. "Hans Wolf," he said, gripping my hand warmly and holding it. "I am from Dusseldorf. I play the cello in the orchestra. Happy Christmas."

standing to: taking up positions

trenches: long deep ditches in the ground where soldiers hide from the enemy

Fritz: (*here*), a name for a German soldier (Fritz is a common German name)

Tommy: a common English name, used here to refer to British soldiers

that would be that: that was all; that was the end of the matter

schnapps (pronounced, *sh-naps*): a German drink made from grain

cello: a musical instrument like a large violin

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"Captain Jim Macpherson," I replied. "And a Happy Christmas to you too. I'm a school teacher from Dorset, in the west of England."

"Ah, Dorset," he smiled. "I know this place. I know it very well." We shared my rum ration and his excellent sausage. And we talked, Connie, how we talked. He spoke almost perfect English. But it turned out that he had never set foot in Dorset, never even been to England. He had learned all he knew of England from school, and from reading books in English. His favourite writer was Thomas Hardy, his favourite book *Far from the Madding Crowd.* So out there in no man's land we talked of Bathsheba and Gabriel Oak and Sergeant Troy and Dorset. He had a wife and one son, born just six months ago. As I looked about me there were huddles of khaki and grey everywhere, all over no man's land, smoking, laughing, talking, drinking, eating. Hans Wolf and I shared what was left of your wonderful Christmas cake, Connie. He thought the marzipan was the best he had ever tasted. I agreed. We agreed about everything, and he was my enemy. There never was a Christmas party like it, Connie.

marzipan: a sweet covering on a cake made from sugar, eggs and almonds

Then someone, I don't know who, brought out a football. Greatcoats were dumped in piles to make goalposts, and the next thing we knew it was Tommy against Fritz out in the middle of no man's land. Hans Wolf and I looked on and cheered, clapping our hands and stamping our feet, to keep out the cold as much as anything. There was a moment when I noticed our breaths mingling in the air between us. He saw it too and smiled. "Jim Macpherson," he said after a while, "I think this is how we should resolve this war. A football match. No one dies in a football match. No children are orphaned. No wives become widows."

"I'd prefer cricket," I told him. "Then we Tommies could be sure of winning, probably." We laughed at that, and together we watched the game. Sad to say,

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Connie, Fritz won, two goals to one. But as Hans Wolf generously said, our goal was wider than theirs, so it wasn't quite fair.

The time came, and all too soon, when the game was finished, the schnapps and the rum and the sausage had long since run out, and we knew it was all over. I wished Hans well and told him I hoped he would see his family again soon, that the fighting would end and we could all go home.

"I think that is what every soldier wants, on both sides," Hans Wolf said. "Take care, Jim Macpherson. I shall never forget this moment, nor you." He saluted and walked away from me slowly, unwillingly, I felt. He turned to wave just once and then became one of the hundreds of grey-coated men drifting back towards their trenches.

That night, back in our dugouts, we heard them singing a carol, and singing it quite beautifully. It was *Stille Nacht*, Silent Night. Our boys gave them a rousing chorus of *While Shepherds Watched*. We exchanged carols for a while and then we all fell silent. We had had our time of peace and goodwill, a time I will treasure as long as I live.

dugout: a shelter for soldiers made by digging a hole in the ground and covering it

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Dearest Connie, by Christmas time next year, this war will be nothing but a distant and terrible memory. I know from all that happened today how much both armies long for peace. We shall be together again soon, I'm sure of it.

Your loving, Jim.

Comprehension Check

1. *Who had written the letter, to whom, and when?*
2. *Why was the letter written — what was the wonderful thing that had happened?*
3. *What jobs did Hans Wolf and Jim Macpherson have when they were not soldiers?*
4. *Had Hans Wolf ever been to Dorset? Why did he say he knew it?*
5. *Do you think Jim Macpherson came back from the war? How do you know this?*

III

I folded the letter again and slipped it carefully back into its envelope. I kept awake all night. By morning I knew what I had to do. I drove into Bridport, just a few miles away. I asked a boy walking his dog where Copper Beeches was. House number 12 turned out to be nothing but a burned-out shell, the roof gaping, the windows boarded-up. I knocked at the house next door and asked if anyone knew the whereabouts of a Mrs Macpherson. Oh yes, said the old man in his slippers, he knew her well. A lovely old lady, he told me, a bit muddle-headed, but at her age she was entitled to be, wasn't she? A hundred and one years old. She had been in the house when it caught fire. No one really knew how the fire had started, but it could well have been candles. She used candles rather than electricity, because she always thought electricity was too expensive. The fireman had got her out just in time. She was in a nursing home now, he told me, Burlington House, on the Dorchester road, on the other side of town.

burned out: destroyed by fire

boarded-up: covered with wooden boards

muddle-headed: confused

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Comprehension Check

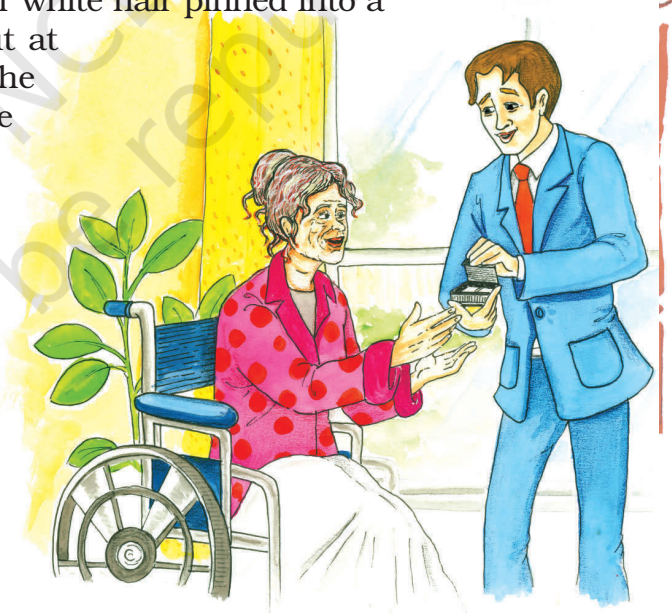
1. *Why did the author go to Bridport?*
2. *How old was Mrs Macpherson now? Where was she?*

I found Burlington House Nursing Home easily enough. There were paper chains up in the hallway and a lighted Christmas tree stood in the corner with a lopsided angel on top. I said I was a friend come to visit Mrs Macpherson to bring her a Christmas present. I could see through into the dining room where everyone was wearing a paper hat and singing. The matron had a hat on too and seemed happy enough to see me. She even offered me a mince pie. She walked me along the corridor. "Mrs Macpherson is not in with the others," she told me. "She's rather confused today so we thought it best if she had a good rest. She has no family you know, no one visits. So I'm sure she'll be only too pleased to see you." She took me into a conservatory with wicker chairs and potted plants all around and left me.

The old lady was sitting in a wheelchair, her hands folded in her lap. She had silver white hair pinned into a wispy bun. She was gazing out at the garden. "Hello," I said. She turned and looked up at me vacantly. "Happy Christmas, Connie," I went on. "I found this. I think it's yours." As I was speaking her eyes never left my face. I opened the tin box and gave it to her. That was the moment her eyes lit up with recognition and her face became suffused with a sudden glow of happiness. I explained about the desk, about how I had found it, but I don't think she was listening. For a while

lit up: became bright with happiness, excitement

suffused with: (glow of happiness) spread all over her face



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she said nothing, but stroked the letter tenderly with her fingertips.

Suddenly she reached out and took my hand. Her eyes were filled with tears. "You told me you'd come home by Christmas, dearest," she said. "And here you are, the best Christmas present in the world. Come closer, Jim dear, sit down."

I sat down beside her, and she kissed my cheek. "I read your letter so often Jim, every day. I wanted to hear your voice in my head. It always made me feel you were with me. And now you are. Now you're back you can read it to me yourself. Would you do that for me, Jim dear? I just want to hear your voice again. I'd love that so much. And then perhaps we'll have some tea. I've made you a nice Christmas cake, marzipan all around. I know how much you love marzipan."

MICHAEL MORPURGO

Comprehension Check

1. *Who did Connie Macpherson think her visitor was?*
2. *Which sentence in the text shows that the visitor did not try to hide his identity?*

working with the text

1. For how long do you think Connie had kept Jim's letter? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Why do you think the desk had been sold, and when?
3. Why do Jim and Hans think that games or sports are good ways of resolving conflicts? Do you agree?
4. Do you think the soldiers of the two armies are like each other, or different from each other? Find evidence from the story to support your answer.
5. Mention the various ways in which the British and the German soldiers become friends and find things in common at Christmas.
6. What is Connie's Christmas present? Why is it "the best Christmas present in the world"?
7. Do you think the title of this story is suitable for it? Can you think of any other title(s)?

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working with language

1. Look at these sentences from the story.

   I *spotted* it in a junk shop in Bridport... The man *said* it was made in the early nineteenth century... This one *was* in a bad condition...

   The *italicised verbs* are in the past tense. They tell us what happened in the past, before now.

   (i) Read the passage below and underline the verbs in the past tense.

   A man got on the train and sat down. The compartment was empty except for one lady. She took her gloves off. A few hours later the police arrested the man. They held him for 24 hours and then freed him.

   Now look at these sentences.

   The veneer *had lifted* almost everywhere. Both fire and water *had taken* their toll on this desk.

   Notice the verb forms *had lifted*, *had taken* (their toll).

   The author found and bought the desk in the past.
   The desk was damaged before the author found it and bought it.
   Fire and water had damaged the desk *before* the author found it and bought it.

   - We use verb forms like *had damaged* for an event in the 'earlier past'. If there are two events in the past, we use the 'had...' form for the event that occurred first in the past.
   - We also use the past perfect tense to show that something was wished for, or expected before a particular time in the past. For example, *I had always wanted one...*
   - Discuss with your partner the difference in meaning in the sentences below.

     When I reached the station, the train left.
     When I reached the station, the train had left.

   (ii) Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

   My little sister is very naughty. When she _____ (come) back from school yesterday, she had _____ (tear) her dress. We _____ (ask) her how it had _____ (happen). She _____ (say) she _____ _____ (have, quarrel) with a boy. She _____ _____ (have, beat) him in a race and he _____ _____ (have, try) to push her. She _____ _____ (have,

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tell) the teacher and so he _____ _____ (have, chase) her, and she _____ _____ (have, fall) down and _____ _____ (have, tear) her dress.

(iii) Underline the verbs and arrange them in two columns, Past and Earlier past.

(a) My friends set out to see the caves in the next town, but I stayed at home, because I had seen them already.

(b) When they arrived at the station, their train had left. They came back home, but by that time I had gone out to see a movie!

(c) So they sat outside and ate the lunch I had packed for them.

(d) By the time I returned, they had fallen asleep!

Past	Earlier past

2. Dictionary work

By the end of the journey, we had run out of drinking water.

Look at the verb *run out* of in this sentence. It is a phrasal verb: it has two parts, a verb and a preposition or an adverb. Phrasal verbs often have meanings that are different from the meanings of their parts.

Find these phrasal verbs in the story.

burn out light up look on run out keep out

Write down the sentences in which they occur. Consult a dictionary and write down the meaning that you think matches the meaning of the phrasal verb in the sentence.

3. Noun phrase

Read the following sentence.

I took out a *small black tin box*.

- The phrase in *italics* is a noun phrase.
- It has the noun — *box* — as the head word, and three adjectives preceding it.

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- Notice the order in which the adjectives occur — *size* (small), *colour* (black) and *material* (tin) of which it is made.
- We rarely use more than four adjectives before a noun and there is no rigid order in which they are used, though there is a preferred order of modifiers/adjectives in a noun phrase, as given below.

determiner	modifier 1 (opinion, feeling)	modifier 2 (size, shape, age)	modifier 3 (colour)	modifier 4 (material)	head word
a/an/ the	nice/lazy/ beautiful	tall/ round/ old/young	red/white/ light/dark	silk/cotton/ woollen	woman man/ table/chair

4. The table below contains a list of nouns and some adjectives. Use as many adjectives as you can to describe each noun. You might come up with some funny descriptions!

Nouns	Adjectives
elephant	circular, striped, enormous, multicoloured, round, cheerful, wild, blue, red, chubby, large, medium-sized, cold
face	
building	
water	

speaking

1. In groups discuss whether wars are a good way to end conflicts between countries. Then present your arguments to the whole class.
2. What kind of presents do you like and why? What are the things you keep in mind when you buy presents for others? Discuss with your partner. (For example, you might buy a book because it can be read and re-read over a period of time.)

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writing

1. Imagine that you are Jim. You have returned to your town after the war. In your diary record how you feel about the changes you see and the events that occur in your town. You could begin like this

   25 December, 1919
   It's Christmas today, but the town looks.....

   Or

   Suppose you are the visitor. You are in a dilemma. You don't know whether to disclose your identity and disappoint the old lady or let her believe that her dear Jim has come back. Write a letter to a friend highlighting your anxiety, fears and feelings.

2. Given below is the outline of a story. Construct the story using the outline.

   A young, newly married doctor _____ freedom fighter _____ exiled to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the British _____ infamous Cellular Jail _____ prisoners tortured _____ revolt by inmates _____ doctor hanged _____ wife waits for his return _____ becomes old _____ continues to wait with hope and faith.

War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families.

— Martin Luther

This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war.

— Erich Maria Remarque, author of *All Quiet on the Western Front*

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The Ant and the Cricket

A fable is a story, often with animals as characters, that conveys a moral. This poem about an ant and a cricket contains an idea of far-reaching significance, which is as true of a four-legged cricket as of a 'two-legged one'. Surely, you have seen a cricket that has two legs!

A silly young cricket, accustomed to sing
Through the warm, sunny months of gay summer and spring,
Began to complain when he found that, at home,
His cupboard was empty, and winter was come.
Not a crumb to be found
On the snow-covered ground;
Not a flower could he see,
Not a leaf on a tree.
"Oh! what will become," says the cricket, "of me?"

At last by starvation and famine made bold,
All dripping with wet, and all trembling with cold,
Away he set off to a miserly ant,
To see if, to keep him alive, he would grant
Him shelter from rain,
And a mouthful of grain.
He wished only to borrow;
He'd repay it tomorrow;
If not, he must die of starvation and sorrow.

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Says the ant to the cricket, "I'm your servant and friend,
But we ants never borrow; we ants never lend.
But tell me, dear cricket, did you lay nothing by
When the weather was warm?" Quoth the cricket, "Not I!

My heart was so light
That I sang day and night,
For all nature looked gay."
"You sang, Sir, you say?
Go then," says the ant, "and dance the winter away."

Thus ending, he hastily lifted the wicket,
And out of the door turned the poor little cricket.
Folks call this a fable. I'll warrant it true:
Some crickets have four legs, and some have two.

adapted from *Aesop's Fables*

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glossary

accustomed to sing: used to singing; in the habit of singing
famine: scarcity of food; having nothing to eat
lay nothing by: save nothing
quoth: (old English) said

working with the poem

1. The cricket says, "Oh! what will become of me?" When does he say it, and why?
2. (i) Find in the poem the lines that mean the same as "Neither a borrower nor a lender be" (Shakespeare).
   (ii) What is your opinion of the ant's principles?
3. The ant tells the cricket to "dance the winter away". Do you think the word 'dance' is appropriate here? If so, why?
4. (i) Which lines in the poem express the poet's comment? Read them aloud.
   (ii) Write the comment in your own words.

If you know a fable in your own language, narrate it to your classmates.

Answers to Questions on page 9.

(a) American Declaration of Independence.

(b) Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first flight, remaining in the air for 12 seconds and covering 120 feet.

(c) Hiroshima Day: an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in Japan on this day.

(d) Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

(e) Yuri A. Gagarin became the first human to orbit the Earth.

(f) Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the Moon.

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2 The Tsunami

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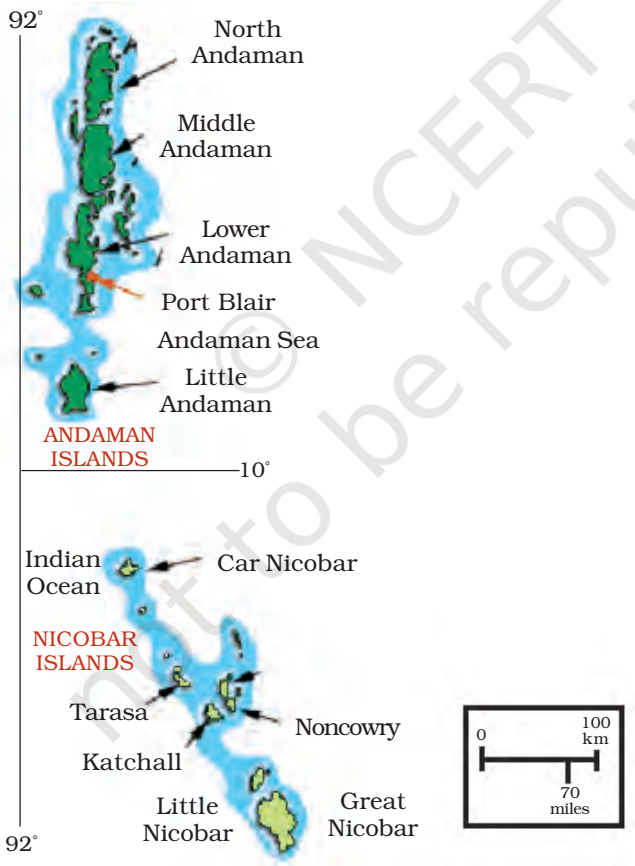
Before you read

Look at the map of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands given here.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands



Now read the sentences below. Rewrite the incorrect ones after correcting the mistakes.

1. Katchall is an island.
2. It is part of the Andaman group of islands.
3. Nancowry is an island in the Nicobar group.
4. Katchall and Nancowry are more than a hundred miles apart. (Hint: the scale of the map is given.)
5. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to the west of India.
6. The Nicobar Islands are to the north of the Andaman Islands.

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A tsunami is a very large and powerful wave caused by earthquakes under the sea. On 26 December 2004, a tsunami hit Thailand and parts of India such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Tamil Nadu coast. Here are some stories of courage and survival.
Did animals sense that a tsunami was coming? Some stories suggest that they did.

I

These stories are all from the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.

Ignesious was the manager of a cooperative society in Katchall. His wife woke him up at 6 a.m. because she felt an earthquake. Ignesious carefully took his television set off its table and put it down on the ground so that it would not fall and break. Then the family rushed out of the house.

When the tremors stopped, they saw the sea rising. In the chaos and confusion, two of his children caught hold of the hands of their mother's father and mother's brother, and rushed in the opposite direction. He never saw them again. His wife was also swept away. Only the three other children who came with him were saved.

archipelago: a group of many islands and the surrounding sea

tremor: a slight shake
Earth tremors: the earth's shakes during an earthquake

chaos: complete disorder or confusion [pronounced, kay-os]

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Sanjeev was a policeman, serving in the Katchall island of the Nicobar group of islands. He somehow managed to save himself, his wife and his baby daughter from the waves. But then he heard cries for help from the wife of John, the guesthouse cook. Sanjeev jumped into the water to rescue her, but they were both swept away.

Thirteen year-old Meghna was swept away along with her parents and seventy-seven other people. She spent two days floating in the sea, holding on to a wooden door. Eleven times she saw relief helicopters overhead, but they did not see her. She was brought to the shore by a wave, and was found walking on the seashore in a daze.

relief helicopters: helicopters bringing help to people (e.g. during floods)

Almas Javed was ten years old. She was a student of Carmel Convent in Port Blair where her father had a petrol pump. Her mother Rahila's home was in Nancowry island. The family had gone there to celebrate Christmas.

When the tremors came early in the morning, the family was sleeping. Almas's father saw the sea water recede. He understood that the water would come rushing back with great force. He woke everyone up and tried to rush them to a safer place.

recede: move back from where it was

As they ran, her grandfather was hit on the head by something and he fell down. Her father rushed to help him. Then came the first giant wave that swept both of them away.

Almas's mother and aunts stood clinging to the leaves of a coconut tree, calling out to her. A wave uprooted the tree, and they too were washed away.

Almas saw a log of wood floating. She climbed on to it. Then she fainted. When she woke up, she was in a

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hospital in Kamorta. From there she was brought to Port Blair.

The little girl does not want to talk about the incident with anyone. She is still traumatised.

traumatised: greatly shocked and distressed

Comprehension Check

Say whether the following are true or false.

1. *Ignesious lost his wife, two children, his father-in-law, and his brother-in-law in the tsunami.*
2. *Sanjeev made it to safety after the tsunami.*
3. *Meghna was saved by a relief helicopter.*
4. *Almas's father realised that a tsunami was going to hit the island.*
5. *Her mother and aunts were washed away with the tree that they were holding on to.*

II

Tilly Smith (a British school girl) was able to save many lives when the tsunami struck Phuket beach in Thailand. Though she has won a number of awards, her parents have not allowed their daughter to be interviewed on television and made into a heroine. Why do you think they took that decision?

Now here is a story from Thailand.

The Smith family from South-East England were celebrating Christmas at a beach resort in southern Thailand. Tilly Smith was a ten-year-old schoolgirl; her sister was seven years old. Their parents were Penny and Colin Smith.

It was 26 December 2004. Deadly tsunami waves were already on their way. They had been triggered by a massive earthquake off northern Sumatra earlier that morning.

"The water was swelling and kept coming in," Penny Smith remembered. "The beach was getting smaller and smaller. I didn't know what was happening."

resort: a place where people go on holiday

triggered: caused (describes a sudden, violent reaction – here, an undersea earthquake caused the tsunami)

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But Tilly Smith sensed that something was wrong. Her mind kept going back to a geography lesson she had taken in England just two weeks before she flew out to Thailand with her family.

Tilly saw the sea slowly rise, and start to foam, bubble and form whirlpools. She remembered that she had seen this in class in a video of a tsunami that had hit the Hawaiian islands in 1946. Her geography teacher had shown her class the video, and told them that tsunamis can be caused by earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides.

Tilly started to scream at her family to get off the beach. "She talked about an earthquake under the sea. She got more and more hysterical," said her mother Penny. "I didn't know what a tsunami was. But seeing my daughter so frightened, I thought something serious must be going on."

Tilly's parents took her and her sister away from the beach, to the swimming pool at the hotel. A number of other tourists also left the beach with them. "Then it was as if the entire sea had come out after them. I was screaming, 'Run!'"

The family took refuge in the third floor of the hotel. The building withstood the surge of three tsunami waves. If they had stayed on the beach, they would not have been alive.

The Smiths later met other tourists who had lost entire families. Thanks to Tilly and her geography lesson, they had been forewarned. Tilly went back to her school in England and told her classmates her terrifying tale.

hysterical: when you are hysterical, you shout, laugh or cry in a wild excited way, without any control over yourself

refuge: shelter or protection from danger

withstood: endured without collapsing

surge: force; momentum

Comprehension Check

Answer the following in a phrase or sentence.

1. *Why did Tilly's family come to Thailand?*
2. *What were the warning signs that both Tilly and her mother saw?*
3. *Do you think Tilly's mother was alarmed by them?*
4. *Where had Tilly seen the sea behaving in the same strange fashion?*

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5. *Where did the Smith family and the others on the beach go to escape from the tsunami?*
6. *How do you think her geography teacher felt when he heard about what Tilly had done in Phuket?*

III

Look carefully at the picture of the boy and his dog, and try to describe the things that you see, using just words and phrases. Either the teacher or one of the students can write down the words and phrases on the blackboard.

This is how you can start —
calm, blue sea .... ruined huts.....

When do you think this picture was taken?

Did you know that very few animals actually died in the tsunami?

Before the giant waves slammed into the coast in India and Sri Lanka, wild and domestic animals seemed to know what was about to happen. They fled to safety. According to eyewitness accounts, elephants screamed and ran for higher ground; dogs refused to go outdoors; flamingoes abandoned their low-lying breeding areas; and zoo animals rushed into their shelters and could not be enticed to come back out.

Many people believe that animals possess a sixth sense and know when the earth is going to shake. Some experts believe that animals' more acute hearing helps them to hear or feel the earth's vibration. They can sense an approaching disaster long before humans realise what's going on.

We cannot be sure whether animals have a sixth sense or not. But the fact is that the giant waves that rolled through the Indian Ocean killed more than 150,000 people in a dozen countries; but not many animals have been reported dead.

Along India's Cuddalore coast, where thousands of people perished, buffaloes, goats and dogs were found unharmed. The Yala National Park in Sri Lanka is home to a variety of animals including elephants, leopards, and 130 species of birds. Sixty visitors were washed away from the Patanangala beach inside the park; but

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no animal carcasses were found, except for two water buffaloes. About an hour before the tsunami hit, people at Yala National Park had observed three elephants running away from the Patanangala beach.

A Sri Lankan gentleman who lives on the coast near Galle said his two dogs would not go for their daily run on the beach. "They are usually excited to go on this outing," he said. But on that day they refused to go, and most probably saved his life.

Comprehension check

Answer using a phrase or a sentence.

1. *In the tsunami 150,000 people died. How many animals died?*
2. *How many people and animals died in Yala National Park?*
3. *What do people say about the elephants of Yala National Park?*
4. *What did the dogs in Galle do?*

working with the text

Discuss the following questions in class. Then write your own answers.

1. When he felt the earthquake, do you think Ignesious immediately worried about a tsunami? Give reasons for your answer. Which sentence in the text tells you that the Ignesious family did not have any time to discuss and plan their course of action after the tsunami struck?
2. Which words in the list below describe Sanjeev, in your opinion?
   (Look up the dictionary for words that you are not sure of.)

cheerful	ambitious	brash	brave	careless
heroic	selfless	heartless	humorous	

   Use words from the list to complete the three sentences below.

   (i) I don't know if Sanjeev was cheerful, _____ or _____.

   (ii) I think that he was very brave,_____ and_____.

   (iii) Sanjeev was not heartless, _____or_____.
3. How are Meghna and Almas's stories similar?

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4. What are the different ways in which Tilly's parents could have reacted to her behaviour? What would you have done if you were in their place?
5. If Tilly's award was to be shared, who do you think she should share it with — her parents or her geography teacher?
6. What are the two different ideas about why so few animals were killed in the tsunami? Which idea do you find more believable?

working with language

1. Go through Part-I carefully, and make a list of as many words as you can find that indicate movement of different kinds. (There is one word that occurs repeatedly — count how many times!) Put them into three categories.

   fast movement slow movement neither slow nor fast

   Can you explain why there are many words in one column and not in the others?
2. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below (the verbs given in brackets will give you a clue).
   (i) The earth trembled, but not many people felt the _____. (tremble)
   (ii) When the zoo was flooded, there was a lot of _____ and many animals escaped into the countryside. (confuse)
   (iii) We heard with _____ that the lion had been recaptured. (relieve)
   (iv) The zookeeper was stuck in a tree and his _____ was filmed by the TV crew. (rescue)
   (v) There was much _____ in the village when the snake charmer came visiting. (excite)
3. Study the sentences in the columns **A** and **B**.

A	B
Meghna was swept away.	The waves swept Meghna away.
Almas's grandfather was hit on the head.	Something hit Almas's grandfather on the head.
Sixty visitors were washed away.	The waves washed away sixty visitors.
No animal carcasses were found.	People did not find any animal carcasses.

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Compare the sentences in **A** to the ones in **B**. Who is the 'doer' of the action in every case? Is the 'doer' mentioned in **A**, or in **B**?

Notice the verbs in **A**: 'was swept away', 'was hit', 'were washed away', 'were found'. They are in the passive form. The sentences are in the *Passive Voice*. In these sentences, the focus is not on the person who does the action.

In **B**, the 'doer' of the action is named. The verbs are in the active form. The sentences are in the *Active Voice*.

Say whether the following sentences are in the Active or the Passive voice. Write A or P after each sentence as shown in the first sentence.

(i) Someone stole my bicycle. __A__

(ii) The tyres were deflated by the traffic police. _____

(iii) I found it last night in a ditch near my house. _____

(iv) It had been thrown there. _____

(v) My father gave it to the mechanic. _____

(vi) The mechanic repaired it for me. _____

speaking and writing

1. Suppose you are one of the volunteers who went to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for relief work after the tsunami. You work in the relief camps, distributing food, water and medicine among the victims. You listen to the various stories of bravery of ordinary people even as they fight against odds to bring about some semblance of normalcy in their lives. You admire their grit and determination. Write a diary entry.

   You may start in this way.

   31 December, 2004

   The killer tsunami struck these islands five days ago. But the victims are being brought in even now. Each one has a story to tell...

2. The story shows how a little girl saved the lives of many tourists when a tsunami struck the beach, thanks to the geography lesson that she had learnt at school. She remembered the visuals of a tsunami and warned her parents.

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Do you remember any incident when something that you learnt in the classroom helped you in some way outside the classroom?

Write your experiences in a paragraph of about 90–100 words or narrate it to the whole class like an anecdote.

Katchall is one of the largest islands in the central group. It is about 61 sq miles in area. It is slightly hilly at the centre, but otherwise remarkably flat.

Betty at the Party

'When I was at the party,'
Said Betty, aged just four,
'A little girl fell off her chair
Right down upon the floor;
And all the other little girls
Began to laugh, but me –
I didn't laugh a single bit',
Said Betty seriously.

'Why not?'– her mother asked her,
Full of delight to find
That Betty – bless her little heart! –
Had been so sweetly kind.
'Why didn't you laugh, my darling?
Or don't you like to tell?'
'I didn't laugh,' said Betty,
'Because it was I that fell.'

–Unknown

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Geography Lesson

Can you imagine what your city would look like if you saw it from ten thousand feet above the ground? Neatly planned and perfect in proportion like a geometric design, it would strike you as something very different from what it actually is while you are in the thick of it.

Here is a poet's description of just such a view of the city, and some questions that come to his mind.

When the jet sprang into the sky,
it was clear why the city
had developed the way it had,
seeing it scaled six inches to the mile.
There seemed an inevitability
about what on ground had looked haphazard,
unplanned and without style
When the jet sprang into the sky.

When the jet reached ten thousand feet,
it was clear why the country
had cities where the rivers ran
and why the valleys were populated.
The logic of geography —
that land and water attracted man —
was clearly delineated
When the jet reached ten thousand feet.

When the jet rose six miles high,
it was clear the earth was round
and that it had more sea than land.

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But it was difficult to understand
that the men on the earth found
causes to hate each other, to build
walls across cities and to kill.
From that height, it was not clear why.

ZULFIKAR GHOSE

glossary

inevitable: that cannot be avoided
haphazard: without plan or order
delineated: shown

working with the poem

1. Find three or four phrases in stanzas one and two which are likely to occur in a geography lesson.
2. Seen from the window of an aeroplane, the city appears
   (i) as haphazard as on ground.
   (ii) as neat as a map.
   (iii) as developed as necessary.
   Mark the right answer.
3. Which of the following statements are examples of "the logic of geography"?
   (i) There are cities where there are rivers.
   (ii) Cities appear as they are not from six miles above the ground.
   (iii) It is easy to understand why valleys are populated.
   (iv) It is difficult to understand why humans hate and kill one another.
   (v) The earth is round, and it has more sea than land.
4. Mention two things that are
   (i) clear from the height.
   (ii) not clear from the height.

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Reprint 2024-25

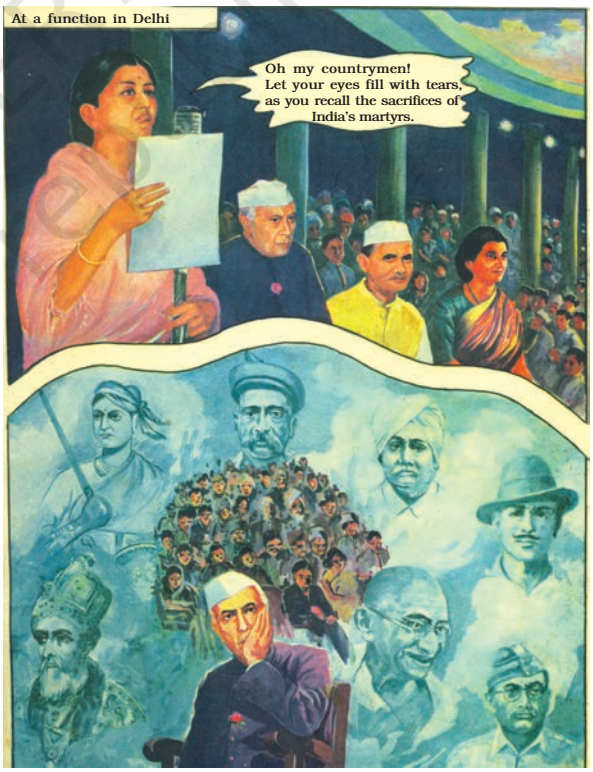
3 Glimpses of the Past

0849CH03

Before you read

Here are some pictorial glimpses of the history of our country from 1757 to 1857. These pictures and 'speech bubbles' will help clarify your understanding of the conditions that led to the event known as the First War of Independence in 1857.

1. The Martyrs



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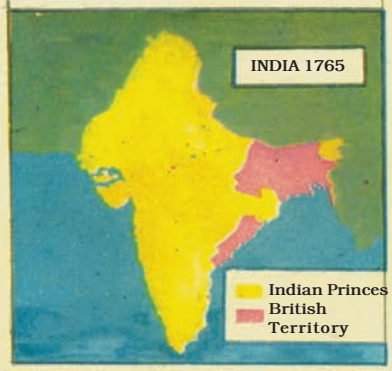
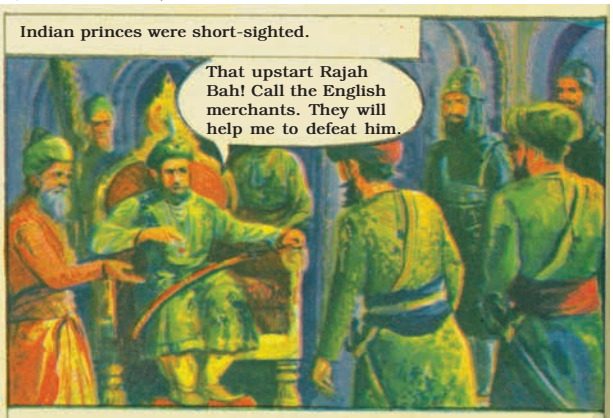
2. The Company's conquests (1757-1849)

With its superior weapons, the British East India Company was extending its power in 18th century India.



Indian princes were short-sighted.

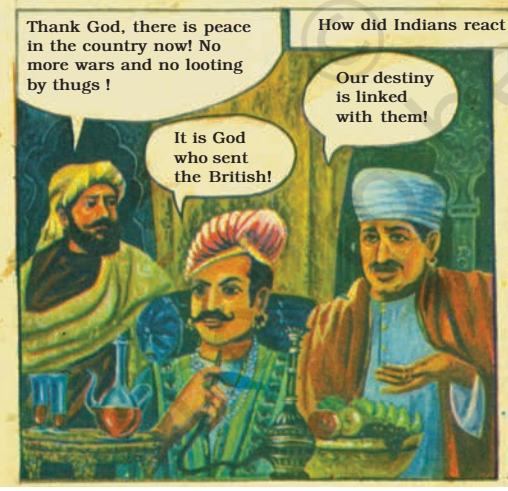


The people had no peace due to such constant fights.

The rivalries helped the East India Company and it could easily subdue Indian princes one by one.

A far-seeing ruler like the brave Tipu of Mysore fought the British till he died fighting!

How did Indians react to these conquests?



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3. British Rule (1765-1836)

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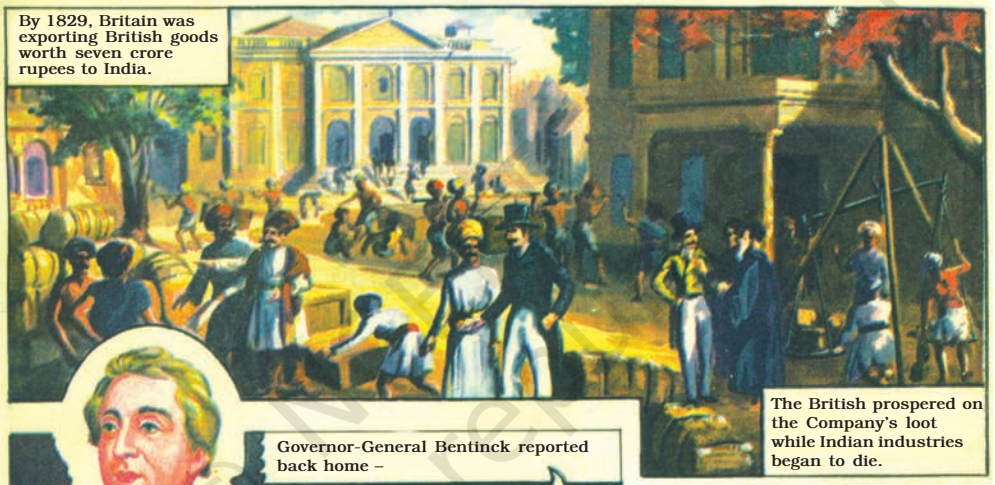
4. Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)

5. Oppression (1765-1835)

But the British continued to oppress Indians. In 1818, they had passed Regulation III. Under it, an Indian could be jailed without trial in a court.

All the time British officers in India drew big salaries and also made fortunes in private business.

By 1829, Britain was exporting British goods worth seven crore rupees to India.



The British prospered on the Company's loot while Indian industries began to die.

Governor-General Bentinck reported back home –

"The bones of cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India."

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6. Dissatisfaction (1835-56)

Education in India was in Persian and Sanskrit. In 1835, a Englishman named Macaulay suggested a change.

We should teach the natives through the English language.

I agree.

English education produced clerks to whom the British gave petty jobs under them. Incidentally, it also produced a new generation of intellectuals.

We must educate our brothers.

And try to improve their material conditions.

For that we must convey our grievances to the British Parliament.

By 1856, the British had conquered the whole of India.

States

British area

They cared little about the needs of Indians.

Our kings have become puppets, and we have lost our old jobs.

And lands.

They are converting our brothers!

You only talk! Do something to drive then out!

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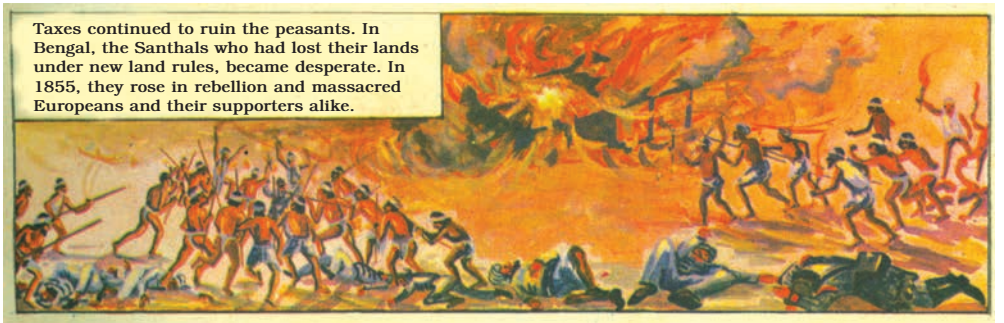
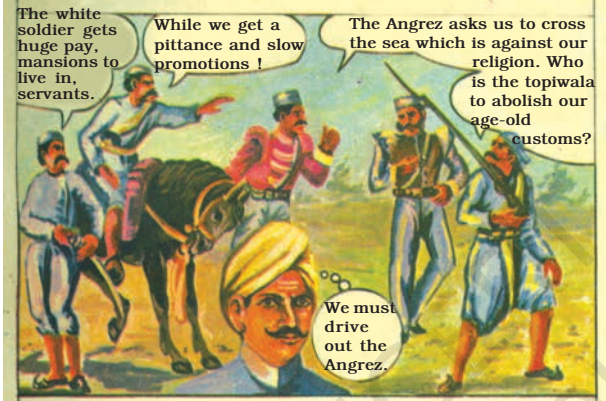
7. The Sparks (1855-57)

Taxes continued to ruin the peasants. In Bengal, the Santhals who had lost their lands under new land rules, became desperate. In 1855, they rose in rebellion and massacred Europeans and their supporters alike.



Discontent was brewing in the East India Company's army too.

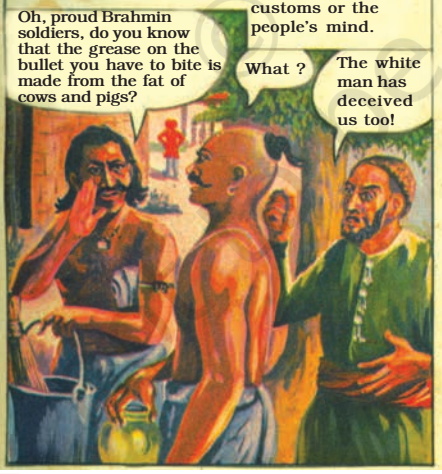


Sepoy Mangal Pande attacked the adjutant of his regiment and was executed.

Thousands of other sepoys revolted. They were stripped of their uniforms,

humiliated and put in irons.

Few Englishmen had cared to understand Indian customs or the people's mind.



Soon, chapaties were sent from village to village to tell the people that their emperor would want their services.

Similarly lotus flowers circulated among Indian soldiers.

The masses gave all help and shelter to the patriots.

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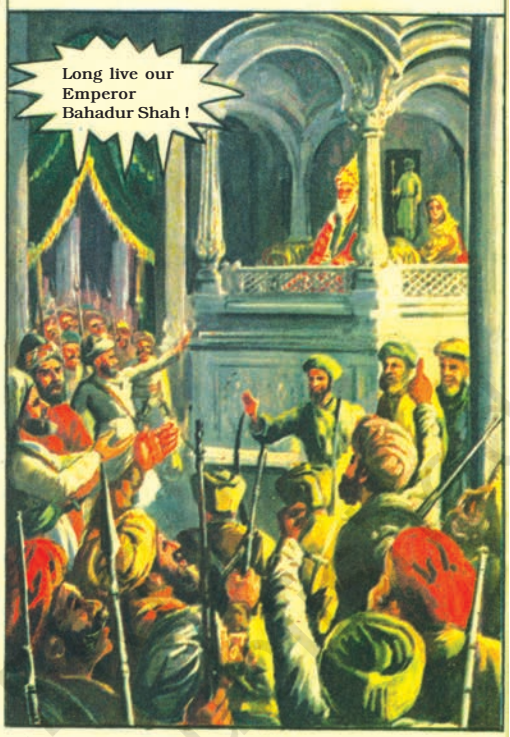
8. Revolt (1857)

Then there was a violent outbreak at Meerut.

The sepoys marched to Delhi.



The rebellion spread wider.

Many landlords had lost their lands because of the British policies, and they were sore.

9. The Fight for Freedom (1857)

from *Our Freedom Movement*
S.D. SAWANT

Comprehension Check

1. *Look at picture 1 and recall the opening lines of the original song in Hindi. Who is the singer? Who else do you see in this picture?*
2. *In picture 2 what do you understand by the Company's "superior weapons"?*
3. *Who is an artisan? Why do you think the artisans suffered? (picture 3)*
4. *Which picture, according to you, reveals the first sparks of the fire of revolt?*

working with the text

Answer the following questions.

1. Do you think the Indian princes were short-sighted in their approach to the events of 1757?
2. How did the East India Company subdue the Indian princes?
3. Quote the words used by Ram Mohan Roy to say that every religion teaches the same principles.
4. In what ways did the British officers exploit Indians?
5. Name these people.
   (i) The ruler who fought pitched battles against the British and died fighting.
   (ii) The person who wanted to reform the society.
   (iii) The person who recommended the introduction of English education in India.
   (iv) Two popular leaders who led the revolt (Choices may vary.)
6. Mention the following.
   (i) Two examples of social practices prevailing then.
   (ii) Two oppressive policies of the British.
   (iii) Two ways in which common people suffered.
   (iv) Four reasons for the discontent that led to the 1857 War of Independence.

working with language

In comics what the characters speak is put in bubbles. This is direct narration. When we report what the characters speak, we use the method of indirect narration.

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Study these examples.

First farmer: Why are your men taking away the entire crop?

Second farmer: Your men have taken away everything.

Officer: You are still in arrears. If you don't pay tax next week, I'll send you to jail.

- The first farmer asked the officer why his men were taking away the entire crop.
- The second farmer said that their men had taken away everything.
- The officer replied that they were still in arrears and warned them that if they did not pay tax the following week, he (the officer) would send them (the farmers) to jail.

1. Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

   (i) *First man*: We must educate our brothers.

   Second man: And try to improve their material conditions.

   Third man: For that we must convey our grievances to the British Parliament.

   The first man said that _____

   _____

   The second man added that _____

   _____

   The third man suggested that _____

   _____

   (ii) *First soldier*: The white soldier gets huge pay, mansions and servants.

   Second soldier: We get a pittance and slow promotions.

   Third soldier: Who are the British to abolish our customs?

   The first soldier said that _____

   _____

   The second soldier remarked that _____

   _____

   The third soldier asked _____

   _____

speaking and writing

1. Playact the role of farmers who have grievances against the policies of the government. Rewrite their 'speech bubbles' in dialogue form first.

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2. Look at the pictures.

Fox accidentally falls into a well

"How do I get out of here?"

"Hello! Is this water sweet?"

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"Too sweet! I've had so much, I might faint."

"Let me taste it."

"Thanks for the help. Come out when you can."

"My mother used to say: Be careful how you take the advice of people you don't know."

(i) Ask one another questions about the pictures.

- Where is the fox?
- What is the fox thinking?
- What does she want to know?
- What happens next?
- Where is the fox now?
- How did it happen?
- Who is the visitor?
- What is the fox's reply?
- Where is the goat?
- What is the goat thinking?

(ii) Write the story in your own words. Give it a title.

_____

_____

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3. Read the following news item.

History becomes fun at this school

Mumbai: Students in the sixth grade of a certain school in Navi Mumbai love their history lessons thanks to a novel teaching aid. It is not surprising given the fact that their study material includes comic books and they use their textbooks for reference to put things into perspective. Besides, students are encouraged to tap other sources of information as well. During history classes, students pore over comic strips of historical periods, enact characters of emperors and tyrants, and have animated discussions on the subject. History has become fun.

In the class students are asked to read the comic strip aloud, after which they break up into groups of four, discuss what they have heard and write a summary. Each group leader reads his group's summary aloud and the whole class jumps into discussion and debate, adding points, disagreeing and qualifying points of view. A sixth grade student says, "It's a lot of fun because everyone gets a chance to express themselves and the summary takes everyone's ideas into account."

According to the school principal the comic strip format and visuals appeal to students. A historian feels that using comics in schools is a great idea. Comics and acting help students understand what characters in the story are actually thinking.

(adapted from *The Times of India*, New Delhi, October 2007)

Based on this news item, write a paragraph on what you think about this new method of teaching history.

4. Find the chapters in your history book that correspond to the episodes and events described in this comic. Note how the information contained in a few chapters of history has been condensed to a few pages with the help of pictures and 'speech bubbles'.

5. Create a comic of your own using this story.

Once the Sun and the Wind began to quarrel, each one saying that he was stronger than the other. At last they decided to test each other's strength. A man with a cloak around his shoulders was passing by. The Wind boasted, "Using my strength I can make that man take off the cloak." The Sun agreed. The Wind blew hard. The man felt so cold that he clasped his cloak round his body as tightly as possible.

Now it was the turn of the Sun which shone very hot indeed. The man felt so hot that he at once removed the cloak from his body. Seeing the man taking off the cloak, the Wind conceded defeat.

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Notes for the Teacher

UNITS 4–7

Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory

- A Satyajit Ray story with a surprise ending that brings in its wake the much needed psychological relief to the sophisticated executive beleagured by a conspiracy, which is a humorous take after all.
- Before asking children to read the text, tell the story part by part, each part ending where the listener wonders what comes next.
- Activity 3 under working with language is about two tense forms — *simple past* and *present perfect*. Notice how both have been used in conjunction with each other. The following explanatory notes may be useful.
  - The *present perfect* tense is used to refer to an action initiated and completed in the past and is associated with the present. It has its effect on the present situation.

    I have seen the Taj. (I know what it looks like.)

    He has arrived. (He is here.)

    I have finished my work. (I am free now.)
- *Present perfect* tense is usual with already, so far,not yet, ever, never etc.
- It is not used with ago, yesterday, last week/month/year, etc.

The Last Bargain

- Here is a method of teaching that may be tried.

  (a) Let children read the first stanza silently.

  Ask the following questions.

  (i) How many persons/characters are there?

  (ii) Who are they?

  (iii) Who is big and who is small?

  (iv) What does the person in the first line say?

  (v) What does the other one in the fourth line say?

  (vi) Do they stay together or part company? Why?

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(b) Now reconstruct the episode. Begin like this.

I was walking on the road looking for work. I saw the king in his chariot. He had a sword in his hand. He was very kind to me. He shook my hand and offered to hire me. I did not accept his offer. To me, power is not a valuable thing. It is not permanent. It won't make me happy. I was looking for something else as a reward for my work.

What is he looking for?

Let us read the next stanza.

(c) Do the other stanzas in the same way.

- The clue to what the person is looking for lies in the last line. The operative phrases are 'the child's play' and 'a free man'.
- The child and her/his play is a metaphor for innocence and inward happiness, which gives this person a sense of fulfilment and freedom from stress and strife. He feels genuinely free and happy in the company of the child.
- Recite each stanza with feeling, pausing at the right places.
- The method suggested may work better for a poem with a story.

The Summit Within

- Adventure and the world of nature – the arduous task of reaching the highest summit in the world makes the climber reflect on the 'internal summits' which are, perhaps, higher than the Everest. The text underscores the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of the adventure in a single perspective.
- Divide the text into three parts. A convenient division is suggested here.
  - '.....that mountains are a means of communion with God'. (end of Part-I)
  - 'It is emotional. It is spiritual'. (end of Part-II)
  - The remaining is Part-III.
- Design while-reading comprehension questions for each part. The multiple choice items are given at the end of the lesson. You may try the following as additional questions.
  - What is the author's personal answer to the question as to why people climb mountains?
  - How is the same question answered in Part-II in a different way?

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- Famous climbers have recorded how they needed *just that help*? Explain the italicised phrase.
- Looking round from the summit, you tell yourself that _____.
  (a) Complete this sentence using the same words as in the text without referring to the book.
  (b) Now complete it using a clause/phrase of your own without changing meaning.
- Activities 2 and 3 under working with language provide ample opportunities for vocabulary development. Extend Activity 2 by choosing new words from the text to cover their adjective and/or adverb forms.

  remark – remarkable – remarkably

  type – typical – typically

  Use each item in a meaningful context, involving more than one sentence.

  'What you say is not appropriate, though it's a good remark.'

  'Isn't that remarkable?'

  'It may be so, but it doesn't mean you are remarkably objective.'
- You may not find the dialogue above remarkable enough, but it meets the immediate requirement appropriately.
- Re-read and discuss passages where the author's admiration for the mountains and passion for adventure comes through.

The School Boy

- A school is a place where children and teachers assemble every morning to learn from one another. Find out if any child would like to describe school in a different way.
- An interesting discussion on different types of schools, supported by pictures from magazines/newspapers, may ensue — a village school where children are sitting on the floor; another school where they are sitting at long desks; an outdoor lesson under a tree, etc.
- Ask children how they reach school. Do they walk or take a bus, etc.? What problems others in remote areas may face in reaching school on time?
- Any suggestions as to how to make school an interesting and enjoyable place!

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This is Jody's Fawn

- A story about a child's emotional preoccupation with the fawn whose mother had to be killed to save his father's life. The story highlights values such as compassion and justice, care and concern for human and animal life.
- Spend some time on a discussion about 'home remedies' for commonplace health problems/ailments. Should we see a doctor about every little thing, or should we talk to the grandmother first?
- The growing concern about preservation of environment and protection of animal life has gone a long way in persuading schools to refrain from dissecting animals for experiment. Elicit children's comments on the issue and on the law that punishes humans for hurting animals.
- Activity 1 under working with language is about reporting questions – yes/no and wh-questions. The use of 'if/whether' in the case of yes/no type questions should be explicitly explained. Devise separate exercises for teaching the use of 'if/whether', the appropriate reporting verb, the changes in pronominals in the reported speech and the sequence of tenses.

  Here is a simple exercise to exemplify some of these points.

  Choose the correct word to complete statements in indirect speech given below. Write words in the blanks given.

  (a) "Where do you come from?"

  I _____(said/asked) him where _____ (he/you) come from.

  (b) "What is your name?"

  He asked me what _____ (my/his) name. (is/was)

  (c) "Are you happy?"

  I asked him _____ (if/whether) he _____ (is/was) happy.

  (d) "Do you live here?"

  He asked me _____ (whether/if) I _____ (live/lived) _____ (here/there).

  (e) "Why are you crying?"

  The teacher asked the child _____ (if/why) she _____ (is/was/were) crying.

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Here is another exercise.

Read the following dialogue between Jody and his father. Rewrite their conversation in indirect speech.

Penny lay quiet, staring at the ceiling.

"Boy, you've got me hemmed in."

"It won't take much to raise the fawn.

It will soon start eating leaves."

"You are smarter than boys of your age."

"We took its mother, and it wasn't to blame."

"It seems ungrateful to leave it to starve."

Begin like this:

Penny lay quiet staring at the ceiling. He said to Jody that _____. Jody replied that it wouldn't _____

- Activity 2 under working with language deals with transitive and intransitive verbs.

  Ask children to underline the direct object in the following sentences.

  He brought me a colourful umbrella.

  I will write a letter to him.

  You should give yourself a chance.

- Activity 3 under writing may be linked with the first task covering home remedies under 'Before you read,' It will be useful to take it up separately also.

A Visit to Cambridge

- Excerpt from a travelogue highlighting exchange of views between two extraordinary persons on what it means to be 'differently abled'. A tour through Cambridge had a surprise, both pleasant and poignant, for the author. He met the brilliant and completely paralysed author of *A Brief History of Time*, and talked to him for a full half-hour.
- Activity 2 under working with language is about the *present participle* (dancing/walking) used as adjective.
- Running on the road, he saw _____. (participle)
- The train is running. _____ (verb)

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- The running train _____ (adjective)
- The use of *past participle* as adjective may also be illustrated here.
- He has broken the window. (verb)
- The window was broken when the almirah was taken out (verb — in passive)
- See the broken window. (adjective)
- Activity 3 under speaking and writing may be done as a project. Lot of oral work to precede the writing task. The final draft should be edited and improved before it is put up on the board.
- Activities 1 and 2 under speaking and writing are about word stress. Stressed syllables to be pronounced clearly and loudly. Some words of more than one syllable from the text may also be listed according to whether the stress falls on the first or the second syllable.

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4 Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory

Before you read

Do you have a good memory? Has your memory ever played any tricks on you?
Forgetfulness often puts you in a tight spot. But forgetting a part of your life completely may drive you crazy. In this story, Bepin Babu goes nearly crazy because he cannot recollect his stay at Ranchi. He has never been to Ranchi, he insists, though there are many witnesses to the contrary. What is the suspense all about?

I

Every Monday, on his way back from work, Bepin Choudhury would drop in at Kalicharan's in New Market to buy books. Crime stories, ghost stories and thrillers. He had to buy at least five at a time to last him through the week. He lived alone, was not a good mixer, had few friends, and didn't like spending time in idle chat. Today, at Kalicharan's, Bepin Babu had the feeling that someone was observing him from close quarters. He turned round and found himself looking at a round faced, meek looking man who now broke into a smile.

"I don't suppose you recognise me."

"Have we met before?" asked Bepin Babu.

The man looked greatly surprised. "We met every day for a whole week. I arranged for a car to take you to the Hudroo falls.

idle chat: unnecessary, routine conversation

meek: quiet; humble

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In 1958. In Ranchi. My name is Parimal Ghose."
"Ranchi?"

Now Bepin Babu realised that it was not he but this man who was making a mistake. Bepin Babu had never been to Ranchi. He had been at the point of going several times, but never made it. He smiled and said, "Do you know who I am?"

The man raised his eyebrows, bit his tongue and said, "Do I know you? Who doesn't know Bepin Choudhury?"

Bepin Babu now turned towards the bookshelves and said, "Still you're making a mistake. One often does. I've never been to Ranchi."

The man now laughed aloud.

"What are you saying, Mr Choudhury? You had a fall in Hudroo and cut your right knee. I brought you iodine. I had fixed up a car for you to go to Netarhat the next day, but you couldn't because of the pain in the knee. Can't you recall anything? Someone else you know was also in Ranchi at that time. Mr Dinesh Mukerji. You stayed in a bungalow. You said you didn't like hotel food and would prefer to have your meals cooked by a

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bawarchi. Mr Mukerji stayed with his sister. You had a big argument about the moon landing, remember? I'll tell you more: you always carried a bag with your books in it on your sight-seeing trips. Am I right or not?"

Bepin Babu spoke quietly, his eyes still on the books. "Which month in '58 are you talking about?"

The man said, "October."

"No, sir," said Bepin Babu. "I spent Puja in '58 with a friend in Kanpur. You're making a mistake. Good day."

But the man didn't go, nor did he stop talking.

"Very strange. One evening I had tea with you in a veranda of your bungalow. You spoke about your family. You said you had no children, and that you had lost your wife ten years ago. Your only brother had died insane, which is why you didn't want to visit the mental hospital in Ranchi..."

When Bepin Babu had paid for the books and was leaving the shop, the man was still looking at him in utter disbelief.

utter disbelief: complete surprise

Comprehension Check

1. *Why did the man stare at Bepin Babu in disbelief?*
2. *Where did Bepin Babu say he went in October '58?*
3. *Mention any three (or more) things that Parimal Ghose knew about Bepin Babu.*

II

Bepin Babu's car was safely parked in Bertram Street by the Lighthouse Cinema. He told the driver as he got into the car, "Just drive by the Ganga, will you, Sitaram." Driving up the Strand Road, Bepin Babu regretted having paid so much attention to the intruder. He had never been to Ranchi — no question about it. It was inconceivable that he should forget such an incident which took place only six or seven years ago. He had an excellent memory. Unless — Bepin Babu's head reeled.

(his) head reeled: he was shocked and confused

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Was he losing his mind? But how could that be? He was working daily in his office. It was a big firm, and he was doing a responsible job. He wasn't aware of anything ever going seriously wrong. Only today he spoke for half an hour at an important meeting. And yet...

losing his mind: becoming mad

And yet the man knew a great deal about him. How? He even seemed to know some intimate details. The bag of books, wife's death, brother's insanity... The only mistake was about his having gone to Ranchi. Not a mistake; a deliberate lie. In '58, during the Pujas, he was in Kanpur at his friend Haridas Bagchi's place. All Bepin Babu had to do was write to — no, there was no way of writing to Haridas. Bepin Babu suddenly remembered that Haridas had left with his wife for Japan some weeks ago, and he didn't have his address.

intimate: very personal and private

But where was the need for proof? He himself was fully aware that he hadn't been to Ranchi — and that was that.

The river breeze was bracing, and yet a slight discomfort lingered in Bepin Babu's mind.

bracing: stimulating

Around Hastings, Bepin Babu decided to roll up his trousers and take a look at his right knee.

There was the mark of an old inch-long cut. It was impossible to tell when the injury had occurred.

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Had he never had a fall as a boy and cut his knee? He tried to recall such an incident, but couldn't.

Then Bepin Babu suddenly thought of Dinesh Mukerji. The man had said that Dinesh was in Ranchi at the same time. The best thing surely would be to ask him. He lived quite near — in Beninandan Street. What about going right now? But then, if he had really never been to Ranchi, what would Dinesh think if Bepin Babu asked for a confirmation? He would probably conclude Bepin Babu was going nuts. No; it would be ridiculous to ask him.

going nuts: going mad/ crazy

And he knew how ruthless Dinesh's sarcasm could be.

Sipping a cold drink in his air-conditioned living room, Bepin Babu felt at ease again. Such a nuisance! Just because they have nothing else to do, they go about getting into other people's hair.

getting into people's hair: interfering with and annoying people.

After dinner, snuggling in bed with one of the new thrillers, Bepin Babu forgot all about the man in New Market.

Next day, in the office, Bepin Babu noticed that with every passing hour, the previous day's encounter was occupying more and more of his mind. If the man knew so much about Bepin Babu, how could he make such a mistake about the Ranchi trip?

Just before lunch Bepin Babu decided to ring up Dinesh Mukerji. It was better to settle the question over the phone; at least the embarrassment on his face wouldn't show.

Two-Three-Five-Six-One-Six. Bepin Babu dialled the number.

"Hallo."

"Is that Dinesh? This is Bepin here."

"Well, well — what's the news?"

"I just wanted to find out if you recalled an incident which took place in' 58."

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"'58? What incident?"

"Were you in Calcutta right through that year? That's the first thing I've got to know."

"Wait just a minute... '58... just let me check in my diary."

For a minute there was silence. Bepin Babu could feel that his heartbeat had gone up. He was sweating a little.

"Hallo."

"Yes."

"I've got it. I'd been out twice."

"Where?"

"Once in February — nearby — to Krishnanagar to a nephew's wedding. And then... but you'd know about this one. The trip to Ranchi. You were there too. That's all. But what's all this sleuthing about?"

"No. I just wanted to — anyway, thanks."

Bepin Babu slammed the receiver down and gripped his head with his hands. He felt his head swimming. A chill seemed to spread over his body. There were sandwiches in his tiffin box, but he didn't eat them. He had lost his appetite.

sleuthing: investigating (an event)

Comprehension Check

1. *Why did Bepin Babu worry about what Parimal Ghose had said?*
2. *How did he try to decide who was right—his memory or Parimal Ghose?*
3. *Why did Bepin Babu hesitate to visit Mr Mukerji? Why did he finally decide to phone him?*
4. *What did Mr Mukerji say? Did it comfort Bepin Babu, or add to his worries?*

III

After lunch-time, Bepin Babu realised that he couldn't possibly carry on sitting at his desk and working. This had never happened in the twenty-five years he had been with the firm. He had a reputation for being a

carry on: continue

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tireless, conscientious worker. But today his head was in a whirl.

Back home at two-thirty, Bepin Babu lay down in bed and tried to gather his wits together. He knew that it was possible to lose one's memory through an injury in the head, but he didn't know of a single instance of someone remembering everything except one particular incident — and a fairly recent and significant one at that. He had always wanted to go to Ranchi; to have gone there, done things, and not to remember was something utterly impossible.

At seven thirty, Bepin Babu's servant came and announced, "Chuni Babu, sir. Says it's very important."

Bepin Babu knew what Chuni had come for. Chunilal had been at school with him. He'd been having a rough time lately and had been coming to see him about a job. Bepin Babu knew it was not possible to do anything for him and, in fact, told him so. But Chuni kept turning up like a bad penny.

Bepin Babu sent word that not only was it not possible for him to see Chuni now, but not in several weeks.

But as soon as the servant stepped out of the room, it struck Bepin Babu that Chuni might remember something about the '58 trip. There was no harm in asking him.

Bepin Babu hurried down the stairs and into the living room. Chuni was about to leave, but seeing Bepin Babu appear, he turned round hopefully.

Bepin Babu didn't beat about the bush.

"Listen, Chuni - I want to ask you something. You have a good memory, and you've been seeing me off and on for a long time. Just throw your mind back and tell me - did I go to Ranchi in '58?"

Chuni said, "'58? It must have been '58. Or was it '59?"

conscientious: careful and correct

head was in a whirl: (here) confused and unable to think clearly

gather his wits together: make an effort to become calm and think clearly

having a rough time: having a lot of problems

turning up like a bad penny: appearing at a place where one is not welcome

didn't beat about the bush: came straight to the point

off and on: now and then

throw your mind back: think back and recall a past event

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"You're sure that I did go to Ranchi?"

Chuni's look of amazement was not unmixed with worry.

"D' you mean you have doubts about having gone at all?"

"Did I go? Do you remember clearly?"

Chuni sat down on the sofa, fixed Bepin Babu with a long, hard stare and said, "Bepin, have you taken to drugs or something? As far as I know, you had a clean record where such things were concerned. I know that old friendships don't mean much to you, but at least you had a good memory. You can't really mean that you've forgotten about the Ranchi trip?"

Bepin Babu had to turn away from Chuni's incredulous stare.

"Do you remember what my last job was?" asked Chunilal.

"Of course. You worked in a travel agency."

"You remember that and you don't remember that it was I who fixed up your railway booking for Ranchi? I went to the station to see you off; one of the fans in your compartment was not working — I got an electrician to fix it. Have you forgotten everything? Whatever is the matter with you? You don't look too well, you know."

Bepin Babu sighed and shook his head.

"I've been working too hard," he said at last. "That must be the reason. Must see about consulting a specialist."

must see about consulting: (here) may have to consult

Doubtless it was Bepin's condition which made Chunilal leave without mentioning anything about a job.

Paresh Chanda was a young physician with a pair of bright eyes and a sharp nose. He became thoughtful when he heard about Bepin Babu's symptoms. "Look, Dr Chanda," said Bepin Babu desperately, "You must cure me of this horrible illness. I can't tell you how it's affecting my work."

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Dr Chanda shook his head.

"You know what, Mr Choudhury," he said. "I've never had to deal with a case such as yours. Frankly, this is quite outside my field of experience. But I have one suggestion. I don't know if it'll work, but it's worth a try. It can do no harm."

Bepin Babu leaned forward anxiously.

"As far as I can make out," said Dr Chanda, "And I think you're of the same opinion — you must have been to Ranchi, but due to some unknown reason, the entire episode has slipped out of your mind. What I suggest is that you go to Ranchi once again. The sight of the place may remind you of your trip. This is not impossible. More than that I cannot do at the moment. I'm prescribing a nerve tonic and a tranquilliser. Sleep is essential, or the symptoms will get more pronounced."

Bepin Babu felt somewhat better the next morning.

After breakfast, he rang up his office, gave some instructions and then procured a first class ticket for Ranchi for the same evening.

tranquilliser: a medicine to reduce stress and anxiety

procured: got (with a little difficulty)

Comprehension Check

1. *Who was Chunilal? What did he want from Bepin Babu?*
2. *Why was Dr Chanda puzzled? What was unusual about Bepin Babu's loss of memory?*

IV

Getting off the train at Ranchi next morning, he realised at once that he had never been there before.

He came out of the station, took a taxi and drove around the town for a while. He realised that the streets, the buildings, the hotels, the bazaars, the Morabadi Hill — with none of these had he the slightest acquaintance. Would a trip to the Hudroo Falls help? He didn't believe so, but, at the same time, he didn't wish to leave with the feeling that he hadn't tried enough. So he arranged for a car and left for Hudroo in the afternoon.

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At five o'clock the same afternoon in Hudroo, two Gujarati gentlemen from a group of picnickers discovered Bepin Babu lying unconscious beside a boulder. When he came round, the first thing Bepin Babu said was, "I'm finished. There's no hope left."

came round: regained consciousness

Next morning, Bepin Babu was back in Calcutta. He realised that there was truly no hope for him. Soon he would lose everything: his will to work, his confidence, his ability, his balance of mind. Was he going to end up in the asylum at...? Bepin Babu couldn't think any more.

Back home, he rang up Dr Chanda and asked him to come over. Then, after a shower, he got into bed with an ice bag clamped on his head. Just then the servant brought him a letter which someone had left in the letter box. A greenish envelope with his name in red ink on it.

Above the name it said 'Urgent and Confidential'. In spite of his condition, Bepin Babu had a feeling that he ought to go through the letter. He tore open the envelope and took out the letter. This is what he read —

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in retribution of: as a punishment for

Dear Bepin,
I had no idea that affluence would bring about the kind of change in you that it has done. Was it so difficult for you to help out an old friend down on his luck? I have no money, so my resources are limited. What I have is imagination, a part of which I used in retribution of your unfeeling behaviour.

Well, you'll be all right again now. A novel I've written is being considered by a publisher. If he likes it enough, it'll see me through the next few months.

Yours, Chunilal

When Dr Chanda came, Bepin Babu said, "I'm fine. It all came back as soon as I got off the train at Ranchi."

"A unique case," said Dr Chanda. "I shall certainly write about it in a medical journal."

"The reason why I sent for you," said Bepin Babu, "is that I have a pain in the hip from a fall I had in Ranchi. If you could prescribe a pain killer..."

SATYAJIT RAY

Comprehension Check

1. *Had Bepin Babu really lost his memory and forgotten all about a trip to Ranchi?*
2. *Why do you think Chunilal did what he did? Chunilal says he has no money; what is it that he does have?*

working with the text

1. The author describes Bepin Babu as a serious and hardworking man. What evidence can you find in the story to support this?
2. Why did Bepin Babu change his mind about meeting Chunilal? What was the result of this meeting?
3. Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls. What do you think was the reason for this?
4. How do you think Bepin Babu reacted when he found out that Chunilal had tricked him?

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working with language

1. Look at these two sentences.

   - He had to buy at least five books to last him through the week.
   - Bepin had to ask Chuni to leave.

   Had to is used to show that it was very important or necessary for Bepin Babu to do something. He had no choice. We can also use 'have to'/ 'has to' in the same way.

   Fill in the blanks below using 'had to'/ 'have to'/ 'has to'.

   (i) I _____ cut my hair every month.

   (ii) We _____ go for swimming lessons last year.

   (iii) She _____ tell the principal the truth.

   (iv) They _____ take the baby to the doctor.

   (v) We _____ complain to the police about the noise.

   (vi) Romit _____ finish his homework before he could come out to play.

   (vii) I _____ repair my cycle yesterday.

2. Here are a few idioms that you will find in the story. Look for them in the dictionary in the following way.

   First, arrange them in the order in which you would find them in a dictionary.

   (*Clue*: An idiom is usually listed under the first noun, verb, adjective or adverb in it. Ignore articles or prepositions in the idiom).

   To help you, we have put in bold the word under which you must look for the idiom in the dictionary.)

   (i) at/from close quarters (close: adjective)

   (ii) break into a smile (break: verb; look under 'break into something')

   (iii) carry on (carry: verb)

   (iv) have a clean record (you may find related meanings under both these words)

   (v) beat about the bush (verb)

   Now refer to your dictionary and find out what they mean.

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3. Study the sentences in the columns below.

A	B
I saw this movie yesterday.	I have seen this movie already.
Bepin Babu worked here for a week last year.	Bepin Babu has worked here since 2003.
Chunilal wrote to a publisher last week.	Chunilal has written to a publisher.
I visited Ranchi once, long ago.	I have visited Ranchi once before.

Compare the sentences in the two columns, especially the verb forms. Answer the following questions about each pair of sentences.

(i) Which column tells us that Bepin Babu is still working at the same place?

(ii) Which column suggests that Chunilal is now waiting for a reply from the publisher?

(iii) Which column suggests that the person still remembers the movie he saw?

(iv) Which column suggests that the experience of visiting Ranchi is still fresh in the speaker's mind?

4. Given below are jumbled sentences. Working in groups, rearrange the words in each sentence to form correct sentences.

You will find that each sentence contains an idiomatic expression that you have come across in the lesson. Underline the idiom and write down its meaning. Then use your dictionary to check the meaning.

One sentence has been worked out for you as an example.

Jumbled sentence: vanished/ The car/ seemed to/ into thin/ have/ air.

Ans: The car seemed to have vanished into thin air.

Idiom: vanished into thin air: disappeared or vanished in a mysterious way

(i) Stop/and tell me/beating about/what you want/the bush

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

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(ii) don't pay/If you/ attention/you might/the wrong train/to the announcement/board

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(iii) The villagers/tried/the crime/on the young woman/to pin

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(iv) Bepin Babu/orders to/telling people/under/loved/doctor's/eat early/that he was

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(v) the students/The teacher/his eyebrows/when/said that/all their lessons/raised/they had revised

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

speaking and writing

1. What do you think happened after Bepin Babu came to know the truth? Was he angry with this friend for playing such a trick on him? Or do you think he decided to help a friend in need?
2. Imagine you are Bepin Choudhury. You have received Chunilal's letter and feel ashamed that you did not bother to help an old friend down on his luck. Now you want to do something for him. Write a letter to Chunilal promising to help him soon.

Or

A prank is a childish trick. Do you remember any incident when someone played a prank on you or your friends? Describe the prank in a paragraph.

There was an old woman
Who lived under a hill,
And if she's not gone
She lives there still.

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The Last Bargain

A bargain is an agreement in which both parties promise to do something for each other. Someone is looking for work, waiting to be hired. He strikes a bargain but thinks it worthless. He tries twice again but doesn't like either. Finally, in the last bargain, when he is hired for nothing whatever, he is happy as never before. What is the bargain, and why is it the best?

"Come and hire me," I cried, while in the morning
I was walking on the stone-paved road.
Sword in hand the King came in his chariot.
He held my hand and said, "I will hire you with my power,"
But his power counted for naught, and he went away in his chariot.

In the heat of the mid-day the houses stood with shut doors.
I wandered along the crooked lane.
An old man came out with his bag of gold.
He pondered and said, "I will hire you with my money."
He weighed his coins one by one, but I turned away.

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It was evening. The garden hedge was all aflower.
The fair maid came out and said, "I will hire you with a smile."
Her smile paled and melted into tears, and she went back alone into the dark.

The sun glistened on the sand, and the sea waves broke waywardly.
A child sat playing with shells.
He raised his head and seemed to know me and said, "I hire you with nothing."
From henceforward that bargain struck in child's play made me a free man.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

working with the poem

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. "The king, sword in hand" suggests
   (i) wealth
   (ii) power
   (iii) more power than wealth.
   Mark the appropriate item in the context of stanza 1.
3. The old man offered the speaker a lot of money. Why did he turn down the offer?
4. Find in the poem, lines that match the following. Read both one after another.
   (i) I have nothing to give you except goodwill and cheer.
   (ii) Her happiness was no more than sorrow in disguise.
   (iii) The king's might was not worth much.
5. How did the speaker feel after talking to the child on the beach?

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5 The Summit Within

Before you read

Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia was a member of the first successful Indian expedition to Mount Everest in 1965. How did he feel when he stood on the highest point in the world? Let us hear his story in his words — climbing the summit and, then, the more difficult task of climbing the summit within.

surged: arose suddenly and intensely

panorama: view of a wide area

jubilant: very happy because of success

tinge: trace/shade

Of all the emotions which surged through me as I stood on the summit of Everest, looking over miles of panorama below us, the dominant one I think was humility. The physical in me seemed to say, 'Thank God, it's all over!" However, instead of being jubilant, there was a tinge of sadness. Was it because I had already done the 'ultimate' in climbing and there would be nothing higher to climb and all roads hereafter would lead down?

By climbing the summit of Everest you are overwhelmed by a deep sense of joy and thankfulness. It is a joy which lasts a lifetime. The experience changes you completely. The man who has been to the mountains is never the same again.

As I look back at life after climbing Everest I cannot help remarking about the other summit — the summit of the mind — no less formidable and no easier to climb.

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Even when getting down from the summit, once the physical exhaustion had gone, I began asking myself the question why I had climbed Everest. Why did the act of reaching the summit have such a hold on my imagination? It was already a thing of the past, something done yesterday. With every passing day, it would become more remote. And then what would remain? Would my memories fade slowly away?

exhaustion: fatigue; tiredness

All these thoughts led me to question myself as to why people climb mountains. It is not easy to answer the question. The simplest answer would be, as others have said, "Because it is there." It presents great difficulties. Man takes delight in overcoming obstacles. The obstacles in climbing a mountain are physical. A climb to a summit means endurance, persistence and will power. The demonstration of these physical qualities is no doubt exhilarating, as it was for me also.

exhilarating: very exciting

I have a more personal answer to the question. From my childhood I have been attracted by mountains. I had been miserable, lost, when away from mountains, in the plains. Mountains are nature at its best. Their beauty and majesty pose a great challenge, and like many, I believe that mountains are a means of communion with God.

communion: state or feeling of close relationship

Once having granted this, the question remains: Why Everest? Because it is the highest, the mightiest and has defied many previous attempts. It takes the last ounce of one's energy. It is a brutal struggle with rock and ice. Once taken up, it cannot be given up halfway even when one's life is at stake. The passage back is as difficult as the passage onwards. And then, when the summit is climbed, there is the exhilaration, the joy of having done something, the sense of a battle fought and won. There is a feeling of victory and of happiness.

defied: frustrated; resisted

Glimpsing a peak in the distance, I get transported to another world. I experience a change within myself

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mystical: spiritual

which can only be called mystical. By its beauty, aloofness, might, ruggedness, and the difficulties encountered on the way, the peak draws me to it — as Everest did. It is a challenge that is difficult to resist.

Looking back I find that I have not yet fully explained why I climbed Everest. It is like answering a question why you breathe. Why do you help your neighbour? Why do you want to do good acts? There is no final answer possible.

And then there is the fact that Everest is not just a physical climb. The man who has been to the mountain-top becomes conscious in a special manner of his own smallness in this large universe.

The physical conquest of a mountain is only one part of the achievement. There is more to it than that. It is followed by a sense of fulfilment. There is the satisfaction of a deep urge to rise above one's surroundings. It is the eternal love for adventure in man. The experience is not merely physical. It is emotional. It is spiritual.

Consider a typical climb, towards the summit on the last heights. You are sharing a rope with another climber. You firm in. He cuts the steps in the hard ice. Then he belays and you inch your way up. The climb is grim. You strain every nerve as you take every step. Famous climbers have left records of the help given by others. They have also recorded how they needed just that help. Else they might have given up. Breathing is difficult. You curse yourself for having let yourself in for this. You wonder why you ever undertook the ascent. There are moments when you feel like going back. It would be sheer relief to go down, instead of up. But almost at once you snap out of that mood. There is something in you that does not let you give up the

firm in: make yourself firm

belays: fixes a rope

ascent: climb

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struggle. And you go on. Your companion keeps up with you. Just another fifty feet. Or a hundred, maybe. You ask yourself: Is there no end? You look at your companion and he looks at you. You draw inspiration from each other. And then, without first being aware of it, you are at the summit.

Looking round from the summit you tell yourself that it was worthwhile. Other silvery peaks appear through the clouds. If you are lucky the sun may be on them. The surrounding peaks look like a jewelled necklace around the neck of your summit. Below, you see vast valleys sloping into the distance. It is an ennobling, enriching experience to just look down from the summit of a mountain. You bow down and make your obeisance to whichever God you worship.

make your obeisance: show your obedience or submission

I left on Everest a picture of Guru Nanak. Rawat left a picture of Goddess Durga. Phu Dorji left a relic of the Buddha. Edmund Hillary had buried a cross under a cairn (a heap of rocks and stones) in the snow. These are not symbols of conquest but of reverence.

The experience of having climbed to the summit changes you completely.

There is another summit. It is within yourself. It is in your own mind. Each man carries within himself his own mountain peak. He must climb it to reach to a fuller knowledge of himself. It is fearful, and unscalable. It cannot be climbed by anyone else. You yourself have to do it. The physical act of climbing to the summit of a mountain

The author and Phu-Dorji on the summit of Mount Everest

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outside is akin to the act of climbing the mountain within. The effects of both the climbs are the same. Whether the mountain you climb is physical or emotional and spiritual, the climb will certainly change you. It teaches you much about the world and about yourself.

I venture to think that my experience as an Everester has provided me with the inspiration to face life's ordeals resolutely. Climbing the mountain was a worthwhile experience. The conquest of the internal summit is equally worthwhile. The internal summits are, perhaps, higher than Everest.

H.P.S. AHLUWALIA

ordeals: painful experiences

resolutely: with determination or firmness

Comprehension Check

1. *Standing on Everest, the writer was*
   (i) overjoyed.
   (ii) very sad.
   (iii) jubilant and sad.
   Choose the right item.
2. *The emotion that gripped him was one of*
   (i) victory over hurdles.
   (ii) humility and a sense of smallness.
   (iii) greatness and self importance.
   (iv) joy of discovery.
   Choose the right item.
3. *"The summit of the mind" refers to*
   (i) great intellectual achievements.
   (ii) the process of maturing mentally and spiritually.
   (iii) overcoming personal ambition for common welfare.
   (iv) living in the world of thought and imagination.
   (v) the triumph of mind over worldly pleasures for a noble cause.
   (vi) a fuller knowledge of oneself.
   Mark the item(s) not relevant.

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working with the text

1. Answer the following questions.
   (i) What are the three qualities that played a major role in the author's climb?
   (ii) Why is adventure, which is risky, also pleasurable?
   (iii) What was it about Mount Everest that the author found irresistible?
   (iv) One does not do it (climb a high peak) for fame alone. What does one do it for, really?
   (v) "He becomes conscious in a special manner of his own smallness in this large universe." This awareness defines an emotion mentioned in the first paragraph. Which is the emotion?
   (vi) What were the "symbols of reverence" left by members of the team on Everest?
   (vii) What, according to the writer, did his experience as an Everester teach him?
2. Write a sentence against each of the following statements. Your sentence should explain the statement. You can pick out sentences from the text and rewrite them. The first one has been done for you.
   (i) The experience changes you completely.
   One who has been to the mountains is never the same again.
   (ii) Man takes delight in overcoming obstacles.
   _____
   (iii) Mountains are nature at its best.
   _____
   (iv) The going was difficult but the after-effects were satisfying.
   _____
   (v) The physical conquest of a mountain is really a spiritual experience.
   _____

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working with language

1. Look at the italicised phrases and their meanings given in brackets.

Mountains are nature *at its best*.	(nature's best form and appearance)
Your life is *at risk*.	(in danger; you run the risk of losing your life.)
He was *at his best/worst* in the last meeting.	(it was his best/worst performance.)

Fill in the blanks in the following dialogues choosing suitable phrases from those given in the box.

at hand at once at all at a low ebb at first sight

(i) *Teacher*: You were away from school without permission. Go to the principal _____ and submit your explanation.

Pupil: Yes, Madam. But would you help me write it first?

(ii) *Arun*: Are you unwell?

Ila: No, not _____ Why do you ask?

Arun: If you were unwell, I would send you to my uncle. He is a doctor.

(iii) *Mary*: Almost every Indian film has an episode of love _____.

David: Is that what makes them so popular in foreign countries?

(iv) *Asif*: You look depressed. Why are your spirits _____ today? (Use such in the phrase)

Ashok: I have to write ten sentences using words that I never heard before.

(v) *Shieba*: Your big moment is close _____.

Jyoti: How should I welcome it?

Shieba: Get up and receive the trophy.

2. Write the noun forms of the following words adding -ance or -ence to each.

(i) endure _____ (ii) persist _____

(iii) signify _____ (iv) confide _____

(v) maintain _____ (vi) abhor _____

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3. (i) Match words under **A** with their meanings under **B**.

A	B
remote	difficult to overcome
means	most prominent
dominant	be overcome/overpowered
formidable	method(s)
overwhelmed	far away from

(ii) Fill in the blanks in the sentences below with appropriate words from under **A**.

(a) There were _____ obstacles on the way, but we reached our destination safely.

(b) We have no _____ of finding out what happened there.

(c) Why he lives in a house _____ from any town or village is more than I can tell.

(d) _____ by gratitude, we bowed to the speaker for his valuable advice.

(e) The old castle stands in a _____ position above the sleepy town.

speaking and writing

Write a composition describing a visit to the hills, or any place which you found beautiful and inspiring.

Before writing, work in small groups. Discuss the points given below and decide if you want to use some of these points in your composition.

- Consider this sentence

  Mountains are a means of communion with God.

- Think of the act of worship or prayer. You believe yourself to be in the presence of the divine power. In a way, you are in communion with that power.
- Imagine the climber on top of the summit—the height attained; limitless sky above; the climber's last ounce of energy spent; feelings of gratitude, humility and peace.
- The majesty of the mountains does bring you close to nature and the spirit and joy that lives there, if you have the ability to feel it.

Some composition may be read aloud to the entire class afterwards.

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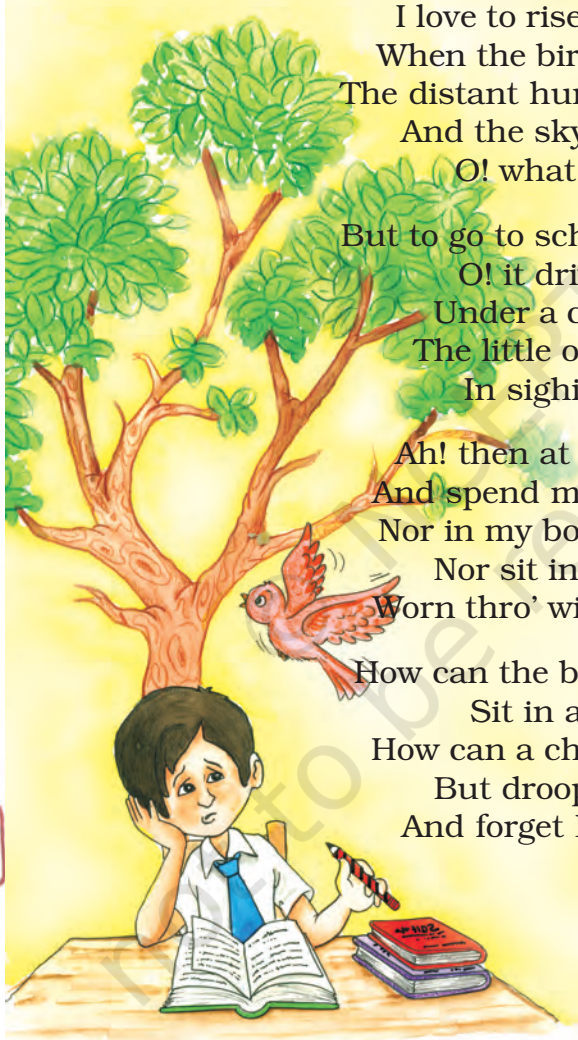
The School Boy

The school boy in the poem is not a happy child. What makes him unhappy? Why does he compare himself to a bird that lives in a cage, or a plant that withers when it should blossom.



I love to rise in a summer morn,
When the birds sing on every tree;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the skylark sings with me.
O! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,
O! it drives all joy away;
Under a cruel eye outworn,
The little ones spend the day,
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour.
Nor in my book can I take delight,
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy,
Sit in a cage and sing.
How can a child when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring.

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O! Father and Mother, if buds are nip'd,
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are strip'd
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and cares dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear?

WILLIAM BLAKE

glossary

nip'd: (nipped) 'to nip something in the bud' is to stop or destroy it at an early stage of its development

strip'd: stripped

plants strip'd of joy: if joy is taken away from plants

working with the poem

1. Find three or four words/phrases in stanza 1 that reflect the child's happiness and joy.
2. In stanza 2, the mood changes. Which words/phrases reflect the changed mood?
3. 'A cruel eye outworn' (stanza 2) refers to
   (i) the classroom which is shabby/noisy.
   (ii) the lessons which are difficult/uninteresting.
   (iii) the dull/uninspiring life at school with lots of work and no play.
   Mark the answer that you consider right.
4. 'Nor sit in learning's bower
   worn thro' with the dreary shower'
   Which of the following is a close paraphrase of the lines above?
   (i) Nor can I sit in a roofless classroom when it is raining.
   (ii) Nor can I learn anything at school though teachers go on lecturing and explaining.
   (iii) Nor can I sit in the school garden for fear of getting wet in the rain.

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Read the following poem and compare it with *The School Boy*.

The One Furrow

When I was young, I went to school
With pencil and footrule
Sponge and slate,
And sat on a tall stool
At learning's gate.

When I was older, the gate swung wide;
Clever and keen-eyed
In I pressed,
But found in the mind's pride
No peace, no rest.

Then who was it taught me back to go
To cattle and barrow,
Field and plough:
To keep to the one furrow,
As I do now?

R.S. THOMAS

The Other Way Round

- Quicksand works slowly.
- There is no egg in eggplant, no ham in hamburger and neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
- Boxing rings are square.
- There are noses that run and feet that smell.

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6 This is Jody's Fawn

0849CH06

Before you read

Often, instead of rushing to the doctor to treat a small cut or burn, we find quick and effective cures using things available at home. Can you think of some such 'home remedies' for

a cut on your knee?
a burn on your arm?
a bee sting?

In this story, Jody's father has been bitten by a rattlesnake. He quickly kills a doe and uses its heart and liver to draw out the poison. Jody wonders what will happen to the little fawn left without a mother.

drift back to: go back to
dilated: enlarged
a close shave: a narrow escape
kept your head: stayed calm in a difficult situation

I

Jody allowed his thoughts to drift back to the fawn. He could not keep it out of his mind. He had held it, in his dreams, in his arms. He slipped from the table and went to his father's bedside. Penny lay at rest. His eyes were open and clear, but the pupils were still dark and dilated.

Jody said, "How are you feeling, Pa?"

"Just fine, son. Old Death has gone thieving elsewhere. But wasn't it a close shave!"

"I agree."

Penny said, "I'm proud of you, boy, the way you kept your head and did what was needed."

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"Pa-"

"Yes, son."

"Pa, do you recollect the doe and the fawn?"

"I can never forget them. The poor doe saved me, that's certain."

"Pa, the fawn may be out there yet. It might be hungry and very scared."

"I suppose so."

"Pa, I'm a big boy now and don't need to drink milk. Why don't I go and see if I can find the fawn?"

"And bring it here?"

"And raise it."

Penny lay quiet, staring at the ceiling.

"Boy, you've got me hemmed in."

"It won't take much to raise it, Pa. It'll soon start eating leaves and acorns."

"You are smarter than boys of your age."

"We took its mother, and it wasn't to blame."

"Surely it seems ungrateful to leave it to starve. Son, I can't say 'No' to you. I never thought I'd live to see another day."

hemmed in: (*here*) caught in a situation where one can't say 'no'

acorns: small brown nuts

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"Can I ride back with Mill-wheel and see if I can find it?"

"Tell your Ma I said you can go."

He sidled back to the table and sat down. His mother was pouring coffee for everyone.

He said, "Ma, Pa says I can go bring back the fawn."

She held the coffee pot in mid-air.

"What fawn?"

"The fawn belonging to the doe we killed. We used the doe's liver to draw out the poison and save Pa."

She gasped.

"Well, for pity sake—"

"Pa says it would be ungrateful to leave it to starve."

Doc Wilson said, "That's right, Ma'am. Nothing in the world comes quite free. The boy's right and his daddy's right."

Mill-wheel said, "He can ride back with me. I'll help him find it."

She set down the pot helplessly.

"Well, if you'll give it your milk—we've got nothing else to feed it."

Mill-wheel said, "Come on, boy. We've got to get riding."

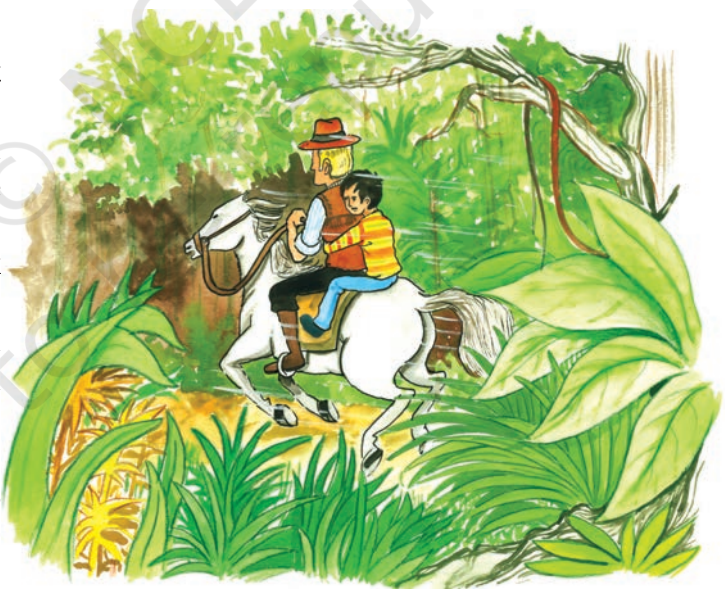
Ma Baxter asked anxiously, "You'll not be gone long?"

Jody said, "I'll be back before dinner for sure. "

Mill-wheel mounted his horse and pulled Jody up behind him.

He said to Mill-wheel, "Do you think the fawn's still there? Will you help me find him?"

sidled back: walked back quietly, trying not to be noticed



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every which way: in different directions

"We'll find him if he's alive. How you know it's a he?"

"The spots were all in a line. On a doe-fawn, Pa says the spots are every which way..."

Comprehension Check

1. *What had happened to Jody's father?*
2. *How did the doe save Penny's life?*
3. *Why does Jody want to bring the fawn home?*
4. *How does Jody know that the fawn is a male?*

II

Jody gave himself over to thoughts of the fawn. They passed the abandoned clearing.

He said, "Cut to the north, Mill-wheel. It was up here that Pa got bitten by the snake and killed the doe and I saw the fawn."

Suddenly Jody was unwilling to have Mill-wheel with him. If the fawn was dead, or could not be found, he could not have his disappointment seen. And if the fawn was there, the meeting would be so lovely and so secret that he could not endure to share it.

He said, "It's not far now, but the scrub is very thick for a horse. I can make it on foot."

"But I'm afraid to leave you, boy. Suppose you got lost or got bitten by the snake, too?"

"I'll take care. It might take me a long time to find the fawn, if he's wandered. Leave me off right here."

"All right, but you take it easy now. You know north here, and east?"

"There, and there. That tall pine makes a bearing."

"So long."

"So long, Mill-wheel. I'm obliged."

He waited for the sound of the hooves to end, then cut to the right. The scrub was still. Only his own crackling of twigs sounded across the silence. He wondered for an instant if he had mistaken his direction.

makes a bearing: acts as a compass and helps to identify directions

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Then a buzzard rose in front of him and flapped into the air. He came into the clearing under the oaks. Buzzards sat in a circle around the carcass of the doe. They turned their heads on their long scrawny necks and hissed at him. He threw his bough at them and they flew into an adjacent tree. The sand showed large cat prints but the big cats killed fresh, and they had left the doe to the carrion birds.

He parted the grass at the place where he had seen the fawn. It did not seem possible that it was only yesterday. The fawn was not there. He circled the clearing. There was no sound, no sign. The buzzards clacked their wings, impatient to return to their business. He returned to the spot where the fawn had emerged and dropped on all fours, studying the sand for the small hoof prints. The night's rain had washed away all tracks except those of cat and buzzards.

buzzard: a large bird like the vulture that eats the flesh of dead animals

adjacent: nearby

parted: moved or pushed aside

Comprehension Check

1. *Jody didn't want Mill-wheel with him for two reasons. What were they?*
2. *Why was Mill-wheel afraid to leave Jody alone?*

III

Movement directly in front of him startled him so that he tumbled backward. The fawn lifted its face to his. It turned its head with a wide, wondering motion and shook him through with the stare of its liquid eyes. It was quivering. It made no effort to rise or run. Jody could not trust himself to move.

He whispered, "It's me."

The fawn lifted its nose, scenting him. He reached out one hand and laid it on the soft neck. The touch made him delirious. He moved forward on all fours until he was close beside it. He put his arms around its body. A light convulsion passed over it but it did not stir.

quivering: shaking slightly

delirious: (*here*) extremely excited

convulsion: shiver

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a china deer: a clay deer that is easily broken

sleek: smooth and shiny

hoist: pull up higher

He stroked its sides as gently as though the fawn were a china deer and he might break it. Its skin was very soft. It was sleek and clean and had a sweet scent of grass. He rose slowly and lifted the fawn from the ground. Its legs hung limply. They were surprisingly long and he had to hoist the fawn as high as possible under his arm.

He was afraid that it might kick and bleat at sight and smell of its mother. He skirted the clearing and pushed his way into the thicket. It was difficult to fight through with his burden. The fawn's legs caught in the bushes and he could not lift his own with freedom. He tried to shield its face from prickling vines. Its head bobbed with his stride. His heart thumped with the marvel of its acceptance of him. He reached the trail and walked as fast as he could until he came to the intersection with the road home. He stopped to rest and set the fawn down on its dangling legs. It wavered on them. It looked at him and bleated.

He said, enchanted, "I'll carry you after I get my breath."

He remembered his father saying that a fawn would follow if it had first been carried. He started away slowly. The fawn stared after him. He came back to it and stroked it and walked away again. It took a few wobbling steps toward him and cried piteously. It was willing to follow him. It belonged to him. It was his own. He was light-headed with his joy. He wanted to fondle it, to run

light-headed: unable to think clearly

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and romp with it, to call to it to come to him. He dared not alarm it. He picked it up and carried it in front of him over his two arms. It seemed to him that he walked without effort.

His arms began to ache and he was forced to stop again. When he walked on, the fawn followed him at once. He allowed it to walk a little distance, then picked it up again. The distance home was nothing. He could have walked all day and into the night, carrying it and watching it follow. He was wet with sweat but a light breeze blew through the June morning, cooling him. The sky was as clear as spring water in a blue china cup. He came to the clearing. It was fresh and green after the night's rain. He fumbled with the latch and was finally obliged to set down the fawn to manage it. Then, he had an idea — he would walk into the house, into Penny's bedroom, with the fawn walking behind him. But at the steps, the fawn balked and refused to climb them. He picked it up and went to his father. Penny lay with closed eyes.

Jody called, "Pa! Look!"

Penny turned his head. Jody stood beside him, the fawn clutched hard against him. It seemed to Penny that the boy's eyes were as bright as the fawn's. He said, "I'm glad you found him."

Jody then went to the kitchen. The fawn wobbled after him. A pan of morning's milk stood in the kitchen safe. The cream had risen on it. He skimmed the cream into a jug. He poured milk into a small gourd. He held it out to the fawn. It butted it suddenly, smelling the milk. He saved it precariously from spilling over the floor. It could make nothing of the milk in the gourd.

He dipped his fingers in the milk and thrust them into the fawn's soft wet mouth. It sucked greedily. When he withdrew them, it bleated frantically and butted him. He dipped his fingers again and as the fawn sucked, he lowered them slowly into the milk. The fawn blew and

romp: play

alarm: frighten

balked: (also baulked) was unwilling (to do something)

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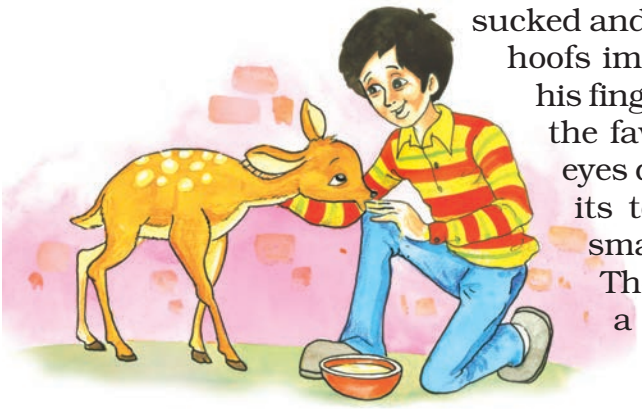

sucked and snorted. It stamped its small hoofs impatiently. As long as he held his fingers below the level of the milk, the fawn was content. It closed its eyes dreamily. It was ecstasy to feel its tongue against his hand. Its small tail flicked back and forth. The last of the milk vanished in a swirl of foam and gurgling.

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

Comprehension Check

1. *How did Jody bring the fawn back home?*
2. *Jody was filled with emotion after he found the fawn. Can you find at least three words or phrases which show how he felt?*
3. *How did the deer drink milk from the gourd?*
4. *Why didn't the fawn follow Jody up the steps as he had thought it would?*

working with the text

1. Why did Penny Baxter allow Jody to go find the fawn and raise it?
2. What did Doc Wilson mean when he said, "Nothing in the world ever comes quite free"?
3. How did Jody look after the fawn, after he accepted the responsibility for doing this?
4. How does Jody's mother react when she hears that he is going to bring the fawn home? Why does she react in this way?

working with language

1. Look at these pairs of sentences.

   Penny said to Jody, "Will you be back before dinner?"

   Penny asked Jody if he would be back before dinner.

   "How are you feeling, Pa?" asked Jody.

   Jody asked his father how he was feeling.

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Here are some questions in direct speech. Put them into reported speech.

(i) Penny said, "Do you really want it son?"

(ii) Mill-wheel said, "Will he ride back with me?"

(iii) He said to Mill-wheel, "Do you think the fawn is still there?"

(iv) He asked Mill-wheel, "Will you help me find him?"

(v) He said, "Was it up here that Pa got bitten by the snake?"

2. Look at these two sentences.

He tumbled backward.

It turned its head.

The first sentence has an intransitive verb, a verb without an object.

The second sentence has a transitive verb. It has a direct object. We can ask: "What did it turn?" You can answer: "Its head. It turned its head."

Say whether the verb in each sentence below transitive or intransitive. Ask yourself a 'what' question about the verb, as in the example above. (For some verbs, the object is a person, so ask the question 'who' instead of 'what').

(i) Jody then went to the kitchen.

(ii) The fawn wobbled after him.

(iii) You found him.

(iv) He picked it up.

(v) He dipped his fingers in the milk.

(vi) It bleated frantically and butted him.

(vii) The fawn sucked his fingers.

(viii) He lowered his fingers slowly into the milk.

(ix) It stamped its small hoofs impatiently.

(x) He held his fingers below the level of the milk.

(xi) The fawn followed him.

(xii) He walked all day.

(xiii) He stroked its sides.

(xiv) The fawn lifted its nose.

(xv) Its legs hung limply.

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3. Here are some words from the lesson. Working in groups, arrange them in the order in which they would appear in the dictionary. Write down some idioms and phrasal verbs connected to these words. Use the dictionary for more idioms and phrasal verbs.

close	draw	make	wonder	scrawny
parted	clearing	sweet	light	pick

speaking

1. Do you think it is right to kill an animal to save a human life? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Imagine you wake up one morning and find a tiny animal on your doorstep. You want to keep it as a pet but your parents are not too happy about it. How would you persuade them to let you keep it? Discuss it in groups and present your arguments to the class.

writing

1. Imagine you have a new pet that keeps you busy. Write a paragraph describing your pet, the things it does, and the way it makes you feel. Here are some words and phrases that you could use.

   frisky, smart, disobedient, loyal, happy, enthusiastic, companion, sharing, friend, rolls in mud, dirties the bed, naughty, lively, playful, eats up food, hides the newspaper, drinks up milk, runs away when called, floats on the water as if dead

2. Human life is dependent on nature (that's why we call her Mother Nature). We take everything from nature to live our lives. Do we give back anything to nature?
   (i) Write down some examples of the natural resources that we use.
   (ii) Write a paragraph expressing your point of view regarding our relationship with nature.
3. In *This is Jody's Fawn*, Jody's father uses a 'home remedy' for a snake bite. What should a person now do if he or she is bitten by a snake? Are all snakes poisonous? With the help of your teacher and others, find out answers to such questions. Then write a short paragraph on — What to do if a snake chooses to bite you.

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7 A Visit to Cambridge

0849CH07

Before you read

This is the story of a meeting between two extraordinary people, both of them 'disabled', or 'differently abled' as we now say. Stephen Hawking is one of the greatest scientists of our time. He suffers from a form of paralysis that confines him to a wheelchair, and allows him to 'speak' only by punching buttons on a computer, which speaks for him in a machine-like voice. Firdaus Kanga is a writer and journalist who lives and works in Mumbai. Kanga was born with 'brittle bones' that tended to break easily when he was a child. Like Hawking, Kanga moves around in a wheelchair.

The two great men exchange thoughts on what it means to live life in a wheelchair, and on how the so called 'normal' people react to the disabled.

Cambridge was my metaphor for England, and it was strange that when I left it had become altogether something else, because I had met Stephen Hawking there.

It was on a walking tour through Cambridge that the guide mentioned Stephen Hawking, 'poor man, who is quite disabled now, though he is a worthy successor to Issac Newton, whose Chair he has at the university.'

And I started, because I had quite forgotten that this most brilliant and completely paralysed astrophysicist,

astrophysicist: scholar of astrophysics — branch of physics dealing with stars, planets, etc.

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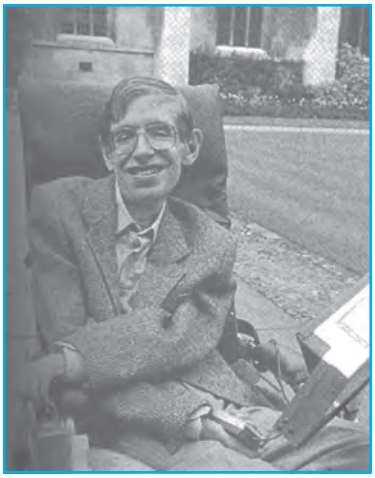

the author of *A Brief History of Time*, one of the biggest best-sellers ever, lived here.

When the walking tour was done, I rushed to a phone booth and, almost tearing the cord so it could reach me outside, phoned Stephen Hawking's house. There was his assistant on the line and I told him I had come in a wheelchair from India (perhaps he thought I had propelled myself all the way) to write about my travels in Britain. I had to see Professor Hawking — even ten minutes would do. "Half an hour," he said. "From three-thirty to four."

And suddenly I felt weak all over. Growing up disabled, you get fed up with people asking you to be brave, as if you have a courage account on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque. The only thing that makes you stronger is seeing somebody like you, achieving something huge. Then you know how much is possible and you reach out further than you ever thought you could.

"I haven't been brave," said his disembodied computer-voice, the next afternoon. "I've had no choice."

Surely, I wanted to say, living creatively with the reality of his disintegrating body was a choice? But I kept quiet, because I felt guilty every time I spoke to him, forcing him to respond. There he was, tapping at the little switch in his hand, trying to find the words on his computer with the only bit of movement left to him, his long, pale fingers. Every so often, his eyes would shut in frustrated exhaustion. And sitting opposite him I could feel his anguish, the mind buoyant with thoughts that came out in frozen phrases and sentences stiff as corpses.

"A lot of people seem to think that disabled people are chronically unhappy," I said. "I know that's not true myself. Are you often laughing inside?"

buoyant: intensely active and vibrant

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About three minutes later, he responded, "I find it amusing when people patronise me."

"And do you find it annoying when someone like me comes and disturbs you in your work?"

The answer flashed. "Yes." Then he smiled his one-way smile and I knew, without being sentimental or silly, that I was looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world.

A first glimpse of him is shocking, because he is like a still photograph — as if all those pictures of him in magazines and newspapers have turned three-dimensional.

Then you see the head twisted sideways into a slump, the torso shrunk inside the pale blue shirt, the wasted legs; you look at his eyes which can speak, still, and they are saying something huge and urgent — it is hard to tell what. But you are shaken because you have seen something you never thought could be seen.

Before you, like a lantern whose walls are worn so thin you glimpse only the light inside, is the incandescence of a man. The body, almost irrelevant, exists only like a case made of shadows. So that I, no believer in eternal souls, know that this is what each of us is; everything else an accessory.

"What do you think is the best thing about being disabled?" I had asked him earlier.

"I don't think there is anything good about being disabled."

"I think," I said, "you do discover how much kindness there is in the world."

"Yes," he said; it was a disadvantage of his voice synthesiser that it could convey no inflection, no shades or tone. And I could not tell how enthusiastically he agreed with me.

Every time I shifted in my chair or turned my wrist to watch the time — I wanted to make every one of our thirty minutes count — I felt a huge relief and exhilaration in the possibilities of my body. How little it mattered then that I would never walk, or even stand.

torso: upper part of the body

incandescence: inner glow or light

accessory: not essential but extra, though decorative

inflection: rise and fall of the voice in speaking

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cliché: phrase or idea used so often that it loses its meaning

claustrophobic: very small and suffocating ('Claustrophobia' is abnormal fear of being in an enclosed space)

gleefully: very happily

I told him how he had been an inspiration beyond cliché for me, and, surely, for others — did that thought help him?

"No," he said; and I thought how foolish I was to ask. When your body is a claustrophobic room and the walls are growing narrower day by day, it doesn't do much good to know that there are people outside smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.

"Is there any advice you can give disabled people, something that might help make life better?"

"They should concentrate on what they are good at; I think things like the disabled Olympics are a waste of time."

"I know what you mean." I remembered the years I'd spent trying to play a Spanish guitar considerably larger than I was; and how gleefully I had unstringed it one night.

The half-hour was up. "I think I've annoyed you enough," I said, grinning. "Thank you for..."

"Stay." I waited. "Have some tea. I can show you the garden."

The garden was as big as a park, but Stephen Hawking covered every inch, rumbling along in his motorised wheelchair while I dodged to keep out of the way. We couldn't talk very much; the sun made him silent, the letters on his screen disappearing in the glare.

An hour later, we were ready to leave. I didn't know what to do. I could not kiss him or cry. I touched his shoulder and wheeled out into the summer evening. I looked back; and I knew he was waving, though he wasn't. Watching him, an embodiment of my bravest self, the one I was moving towards, the one I had believed in for so many years, alone, I knew that my journey was over. For now.

FIRDAUS KANGA
from *Heaven on Wheels*

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Comprehension Check

Which is the right sentence?

1. *"Cambridge was my metaphor for England." To the writer,*
   - *(i) Cambridge was a reputed university in England.*
   - *(ii) England was famous for Cambridge.*
   - *(iii) Cambridge was the real England.*
2. *The writer phoned Stephen Hawking's house*
   - *(i) from the nearest phone booth.*
   - *(ii) from outside a phone booth.*
   - *(iii) from inside a phone booth.*
3. *Every time he spoke to the scientist, the writer felt guilty because*
   - *(i) he wasn't sure what he wanted to ask.*
   - *(ii) he forced the scientist to use his voice synthesiser.*
   - *(iii) he was face to face with a legend.*
4. *"I felt a huge relief... in the* ***possibilities of my body****." In the given context, the highlighted words refer to*
   - *(i) shifting in the wheelchair, turning the wrist.*
   - *(ii) standing up, walking.*
   - *(iii) speaking, writing.*

working with the text

Answer the following questions.

1. (i) Did the prospect of meeting Stephen Hawking make the writer nervous? If so, why?
   (ii) Did he at the same time feel very excited? If so, why?
2. Guess the first question put to the scientist by the writer.
3. Stephen Hawking said, "I've had no choice." Does the writer think there was a choice? What was it?
4. "I could feel his anguish." What could be the anguish?
5. What endeared the scientist to the writer so that he said he was looking at one of the most beautiful men in the world?
6. Read aloud the description of 'the beautiful' man. Which is the most beautiful sentence in the description?

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7. (i) If 'the lantern' is the man, what would its 'walls' be?
   (ii) What is housed within the thin walls?
   (iii) What general conclusion does the writer draw from this comparison?
8. What is the scientist's message for the disabled?
9. Why does the writer refer to the guitar incident? Which idea does it support?
10. The writer expresses his great gratitude to Stephen Hawking. What is the gratitude for?
11. Complete the following sentences taking their appropriate parts from both the boxes below.
   (i) There was his assistant on the line ...
   (ii) You get fed up with people asking you to be brave, ...
   (iii) There he was, ...
   (iv) You look at his eyes which can speak, ...
   (v) It doesn't do much good to know ...

A

- tapping at a little switch in his hand
- and I told him
- that there are people
- as if you have a courage account
- and they are saying something huge and urgent

B

- trying to find the words on his computer.
- I had come in a wheelchair from India.
- on which you are too lazy to draw a cheque.
- smiling with admiration to see you breathing still.
- it is hard to tell what.

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working with language

1. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using the appropriate forms of the words given in the following box.

guide succeed chair travel pale draw true

(i) I met a _____ from an antique land.

(ii) I need special _____ in mathematics. I can't count the number of times I have failed in the subject.

(iii) The guide called Stephen Hawking a worthy _____ to Issac Newton.

(iv) His other problems _____ into insignificance beside this unforeseen mishap.

(v) The meeting was _____ by the youngest member of the board.

(vi) Some people say 'yours _____' when they informally refer to themselves.

(vii) I wish it had been a _____ match. We would have been spared the noise of celebrations, at least.

2. Look at the following words.

walk stick

Can you create a meaningful phrase using both these words?

(It is simple. Add -ing to the verb and use it before the noun. Put an article at the beginning.)

..a walking stick

Now make six such phrases using the words given in the box.

read/session	smile/face	revolve/chair
walk/tour	dance/doll	win/chance

3. Use all or both in the blanks. Tell your partner why you chose one or the other.

(i) He has two brothers. _____ are lawyers.

(ii) More than ten persons called. _____ of them wanted to see you.

(iii) They _____ cheered the team.

(iv) _____ her parents are teachers.

(v) How much have you got? Give me _____ of it.

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4. Complete each sentence using the right form of the adjective given in brackets.
   (i) My friend has one of the _____ cars on the road. (fast)
   (ii) This is the _____ story I have ever read. (interesting)
   (iii) What you are doing now is _____ than what you did yesterday. (easy)
   (iv) Ramesh and his wife are both _____. (short)
   (v) He arrived _____ as usual. Even the chief guest came _____ than he did. (late, early)

Speaking and writing

1. Say the following words with correct stress. Pronounce the parts given in colour loudly and clearly.

camel	balloon
decent	opinion
fearless	enormous
careful	fulfil
father	together
govern	degree
bottle	before

- In a word having more than one syllable, the stressed syllable is the one that is more prominent than the other syllable(s)
- A word has as many syllables as it has vowels.
  man (one syllable)
  ´manner (two syllables)
- The mark (´) indicates that the first syllable in 'manner' is more prominent than the other.

2. Underline stressed syllables in the following words. Consult the dictionary or ask the teacher if necessary.

artist	mistake	accident	moment
compare	satisfy	relation	table
illegal	agree	backward	mountain

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3. Writing a notice for the School Notice Board.

Step 1

Discuss why notices are put up on the notice board.
What kinds of 'notices' have you lately seen on the board?

How is a notice different from a letter or a descriptive paragraph?

Step 2

Suppose you have lost or found something on the campus.
What have you lost or found?

You want to write a notice about it. If you have lost something, you want it restored to you in case someone has found it. If you have found something, you want to return it to its owner.

Step 3

Write a few lines describing the object you have lost or found. Mention the purpose of the notice in clear terms. Also write your name, class, section and date.

Step 4

Let one member of each group read aloud the notice to the entire class.

Compare your notice with the other notices, and make changes, if necessary, with the help of the teacher.

or

- Imagine that you are a journalist.
- You have been asked to interview the president of the village panchayat.
- Write eight to ten questions you wish to ask.
- The questions should elicit comments as well as plans regarding water and electricity, cleanliness and school education in the village.

A Crooked Rhyme

There was a crooked man, and he walked a crooked mile,
He found a crooked coin against a crooked stile;
He bought a crooked cat, which caught a crooked mouse,
And they all lived together in a little crooked house.

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Notes for the Teacher

UNIT 8

A Short Monsoon Diary

- Some extracts from the diary of a nature lover who enjoys the monsoon in the hills and observes the accompanying changes in the world of flora and fauna.
- Activities under working with language are numerous and of different types. Spend sufficient time on each activity and devise, wherever necessary, new but related exercises for further practice.
- The following project may be tried under writing.
  - Do you notice the changes that occur in nature as the seasons change? Write five or six sentences about what you see in nature in your part of the country during the months of May, August and December.
  - Record the daily temperature for a fortnight and note down the maximum and minimum temperatures.
  - Comment on the rise and fall in temperature.
  - Record the time of sunrise and sunset for a fortnight and check if there is any appreciable change in the time.

On the Grasshopper and Cricket

- This poem is relatively difficult. The difficulty lies in its brevity of expression and complexity of thought.
- The introductory note and activities under working with the poem should be done elaborately adding additional explanatory notes/tasks, wherever necessary.
- Compare it with *The Ant and the Cricket* to bring out differences of style and theme clearly with examples.
- To concretise 'the poetry of earth' or 'the sounds of nature', use the poem given below, which is all about animal cries.

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Ask children to rearrange the lines taking note of the words that rhyme. The last line of each stanza begins with 'But'.

Cows moo.
Lions roar.
But I speak.
Bears snore.
Doves coo.
Crickets creak.

Dogs growl.
Horses neigh.
But I talk.
Wolves howl.
Donkeys bray.
Parrots squawk.

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8 A Short Monsoon Diary

Before you read

Do you know what a diary is? It is a record of personal experiences written day after day over a long period of time. You can also use a diary to note down things you plan to do immediately or in future.

One of the most famous diaries published as a book is The Diary of Anne Frank.

Here are a few extracts from Ruskin Bond's diary in which he portrays the silent miracles of nature and life's little joys and regrets. Read on.

I

June 24

melancholy: very sad (the mist is called melancholy because it makes people feel melancholy)

blankets: covers

The first day of monsoon mist. And it's strange how all the birds fall silent as the mist comes climbing up the hill. Perhaps that's what makes the mist so melancholy; not only does it conceal the hills, it blankets them in silence too. Only an hour ago the trees were ringing with birdsong. And now the forest is deathly still as though it were midnight.

Through the mist Bijju is calling to his sister. I can hear him running about on the hillside but I cannot see him.

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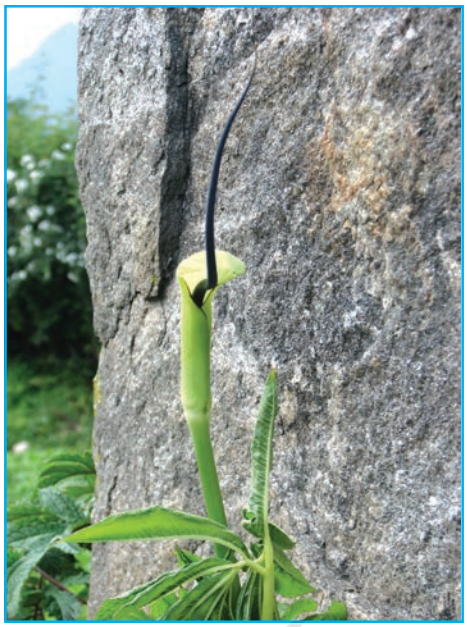
June 25



Some genuine early-monsoon rain, warm and humid, and not that cold high-altitude stuff we've been having all year. The plants seem to know it too, and the first cobra lily rears its head from the ferns as I walk up to the bank and post office.

The mist affords a certain privacy.

A school boy asked me to describe the hill station and valley in one sentence, and all I could say was: "A paradise that might have been."

June 27

The rains have heralded the arrival of some seasonal visitors—a leopard, and several thousand leeches.

Yesterday afternoon the leopard lifted a dog from near the servants' quarter below the school. In the evening it attacked one of Bijju's cows but fled at the approach of Bijju's mother, who came screaming imprecations.

As for the leeches, I shall soon get used to a little bloodletting every day.

Other new arrivals are the scarlet minivets (the females are yellow), flitting silently among the leaves like brilliant jewels. No matter how leafy the trees, these brightly coloured birds cannot conceal themselves, although, by remaining absolutely silent, they sometimes contrive to go unnoticed. Along come a pair of drongos, unnecessarily aggressive, chasing the minivets away.

fern: a flowerless plant with feathery green leaves

heralded: announced or brought the news of

imprecations: curses

bloodletting: losing blood (Decades ago, leeches were used to remove blood from a patient's body)

scarlet minivet: bright red bird like a cuckoo

drongo: a song-bird with a stout bill

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A tree creeper moves rapidly up the trunk of the oak tree, snapping up insects all the way. Now that the rains are here, there is no dearth of food for the insectivorous birds.

Comprehension Check

1. *Why is the author not able to see Bijju?*
2. *What are the two ways in which the hills appear to change when the mist comes up?*

II

August 2

drumming: falling noisily

All night the rain has been drumming on the corrugated tin roof. There has been no storm, no thunder, just the steady swish of a tropical downpour. It helps me to lie awake; at the same time, it doesn't keep me from sleeping.

It is a good sound to read by — the rain outside, the quiet within — and, although tin roofs are given to springing unaccountable leaks, there is a feeling of being untouched by, and yet in touch with, the rain.

August 3

The rain stops. The clouds begin to break up, the sun strikes the hill on my left. A woman is chopping up sticks. I hear the tinkle of cowbells. In the oak tree, a crow shakes the raindrops from his feathers and caws disconsolately. Water drips from a leaking drainpipe. And suddenly, clean and pure, the song of the whistling thrush emerges like a dark sweet secret from the depths of the ravine.

disconsolately: unhappily

ravine: valley

August 12

Endless rain, and a permanent mist. We haven't seen the sun for eight or nine days. Everything damp and soggy. Nowhere to go. Pace the room, look out of the window at a few bobbing umbrellas. At least it isn't cold

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rain. The hillsides are lush as late-monsoon flowers begin to appear — wild balsam, dahlias, begonias and ground orchids.

August 31

It is the last day of August, and the lush monsoon growth has reached its peak. The seeds of the cobra lily are turning red, signifying that the rains are coming to an end.

In a few days the ferns will start turning yellow, but right now they are still firm, green and upright. Ground orchids, mauve lady's slipper and the white butterfly orchids put on a fashion display on the grassy slopes of Landour. Wild dahlias, red, yellow and magenta, rear their heads from the rocky crevices where they have taken hold.

Snakes and rodents, flooded out of their holes and burrows, take shelter in roofs, attics and godowns. A shrew, weak of eyesight, blunders about the rooms, much to the amusement of the children.

"Don't kill it," admonishes their grandmother. "*Chuchundars* are lucky — they bring money!"

And sure enough, I receive a cheque in the mail. Not a very large one, but welcome all the same.

crevices: narrow openings or cracks in rock or wall

shrew: (find its Hindi equivalent in the next sentence)

October 3

We have gone straight from monsoon into winter rain. Snow at higher altitudes.

After an evening hailstorm, the sky and hills are suffused with a beautiful golden light.

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January 26

Winter Rains in the Hills

In the hushed silence of the house
when I am quite alone, and my friend, who was here
has gone, it is very lonely, very quiet,
as I sit in a liquid silence, a silence within,
surrounded by the rhythm of rain,
the steady drift
of water on leaves, on lemons, on roof,
drumming on drenched dahlias and window panes,
while the mist holds the house in a dark caress.

As I pause near a window, the rain stops.
And starts again.
And the trees, no longer green but grey,
menace me with their loneliness.

caress: touching or holding lovingly

menace: threaten

March 23

Late March. End of winter.

The blackest cloud I've ever seen squatted over Mussoorie, and then it hailed marbles for half an hour. Nothing like a hailstorm to clear the sky. Even as I write, I see a rainbow forming.

RUSKIN BOND

Comprehension Check

1. *When does the monsoon season begin and when does it end? How do you prepare to face the monsoon?*
2. *Which hill-station does the author describe in this diary entry?*
3. *For how many days does it rain without stopping? What does the author do on these days?*
4. *Where do the snakes and rodents take shelter? Why?*
5. *What did the author receive in the mail?*

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working with the text

1. Look carefully at the diary entries for June 24-25, August 2 and March 23. Now write down the changes that happen as the rains progress from June to March.
2. Why did the grandmother ask the children not to kill the *Chuchundar*?
3. What signs do we find in Nature which show that the monsoons are about to end?
4. Complete the following sentences.
   (i) Bijju is not seen but his voice is heard because _____.
   (ii) The writer describes the hill station and valley as _____.
   (iii) The leopard was successful in _____ but had to flee when _____.
   (iv) The minivets are easily noticed because _____.
   (v) It looks like a fashion display on the slopes when _____.
   (vi) During the monsoon season, snakes and rodents are found in roofs and attics because _____.
5. 'Although tin roofs are given to springing unaccountable leaks, there is a feeling of being untouched by, and yet in touch with, the rain.'
   (i) Why has the writer used the word, 'springing'?
   (ii) How is the writer untouched by the rain?
   (iii) How is the writer in touch with the rain at the same time?
6. Mention a few things that can happen when there is endless rain for days together.
7. What is the significance of cobra lily in relation to the monsoon season, its beginning and end?

working with language

1. Here are some words that are associated with the monsoon. Add as many words as you can to this list. Can you find words for these in your languages?

   downpour floods mist cloudy powercuts cold umbrella

2. Look at the sentences below.
   (i) Bijju wandered into the garden in the evening.
   (ii) The trees were ringing with birdsong.

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Notice the highlighted verbs.

The verb wandered tells us what Bijju did that evening. But the verb was ringing tells us what was happening continually at same time in the past (the birds were chirping in the trees).

Now look at the sentences below. They tell us about something that happened in the past. They also tell us about other things that happened continually, at the same time in the past.

Put the verbs in the brackets into their proper forms. The first one is done for you.

(i) We (get out) of the school bus. The bell (ring) and everyone (rush) to class.

We got out of the school bus. The bell was ringing and everyone was rushing to class.

(ii) The traffic (stop). Some people (sit) on the road and they (shout) slogans.

(iii) I (wear) my raincoat. It (rain) and people (get) wet.

(iv) She (see) a film. She (narrate) it to her friends who (listen) carefully.

(v) We (go) to the exhibition. Some people (buy) clothes while others (play) games.

(vi) The class (is) quiet. Some children (read) books and the rest (draw).

3. Here are some words from the lesson which describe different kinds of sounds.

drum swish tinkle caw drip

(i) Match these words with their correct meanings.

(a) to fall in small drops

(b) to make a sound by hitting a surface repeatedly

(c) to move quickly through the air, making a soft sound

(d) harsh sound made by birds

(e) ringing sound (of a bell or breaking glass, etc.)

(ii) Now fill in the blanks using the correct form of the words given above.

(a) Ramesh _____ on his desk in impatience.

(b) Rain water _____ from the umbrella all over the carpet.

(c) The pony _____ its tail.

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(d) The _____ of breaking glass woke me up.

(e) The _____ of the raven disturbed the child's sleep.

4. And sure enough, I received a cheque in the mail.

Complete each sentence below by using appropriate phrase from the ones given below.

sure enough	colourful enough	serious enough
kind enough	big enough	fair enough
brave enough	foolish enough	anxious enough

(i) I saw thick black clouds in the sky. And _____ _____ it soon started raining heavily.

(ii) The blue umbrella was _____ _____ for the brother and sister.

(iii) The butterflies are _____ _____ to get noticed.

(iv) The lady was _____ _____ to chase the leopard.

(v) The boy was _____ _____ to call out to his sister.

(vi) The man was _____ _____ to offer help.

(vii) The victim's injury was _____ _____ for him to get admitted in hospital.

(viii) That person was _____ _____ to repeat the same mistake again.

(ix) He told me he was sorry and he would compensate for the loss.

I said, '_____ _____.'

speaking

1. Do you believe in superstitions? Why, or why not? Working with your partner, write down three superstitious beliefs that you are familiar with.
2. How many different kinds of birds do you come across in the lesson? How many varieties do you see in your neighbourhood? Are there any birds that you used to see earlier in your neighbourhood but not now? In groups discuss why you think this is happening.

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writing

1. The monsoons are a time of great fun and even a few adventures: playing in the rain and getting wet, wading through knee-deep water on your way to school, water flooding the house or the classroom, powercuts and so on.

   Write a paragraph describing an incident that occurred during the rains which you can never forget.

or

Write a poem of your own about the season of spring when trees are in full bloom.

The Oak

The oak stands straight and tall,
but not in boots,
nor any shoes at all:
just in roots.

—Norma Farber

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On the Grasshopper and Cricket

Unlike The Ant and the Cricket *(page 21), which tells a story, this is a nature poem. In it, the grasshopper and cricket do not appear as characters in a story. Rather, they act as symbols, each suggesting something else. Read the poem and notice how 'the poetry of earth' keeps on through summer and winter in a never-ending song. Who sings the song?*

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead,
That is the grasshopper's — he takes the lead
In summer luxury — he has never done
With his delights, for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stone there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost;
The grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

JOHN KEATS

glossary

wrought: brought about
shrills: comes through loud and clear

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working with the poem

1. Discuss with your partner the following definition of a poem.

   A poem is made of words arranged in a beautiful order. These words, when read aloud with feeling, have a music and meaning of their own.

2. 'The poetry of earth' is not made of words. What is it made of, as suggested in the poem?
3. Find in the poem lines that match the following.
   (i) The grasshopper's happiness never comes to an end.
   (ii) The cricket's song has a warmth that never decreases.
4. Which word in stanza 2 is opposite in meaning to 'the frost'?
5. The poetry of earth continues round the year through a cycle of two seasons. Mention each with its representative voice.

Same is different

- The bandage was wound around the wound.
- The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- They were too close to the door to close it.
- There is no time like the present to present the present.

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